

# ELECTORAL POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ASSAM: A STUDY OF JORHAT DISTRICT



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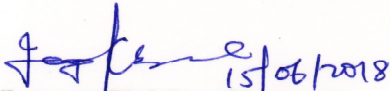
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## **CERTIFICATE BY GUIDE**

*This is to certify that Mr. Navajyoti Borah, Research Scholar in the Department of Political Science of Gauhati University, worked under my guidance while preparing this thesis entitled “ELECTRORAL POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ASSAM : A STUDY OF JORHAT DISTRICT”. He has fulfilled all necessary requirements relating to submission of a thesis for Ph. D. Degree of Gauhati University. This thesis is the result of his own investigation and neither this thesis nor any part thereof was submitted for any other degree or diploma to this or any other University.*

  
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## DECLARATION

*I do hereby declare that the work of the thesis entitled “**Electoral Politics and Political Participation in Assam: A Study of Jorhat District**” is the original work based on my own research investigation for the award of Ph.D. degree in the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University. The thesis or any part of it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma.*

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## **PREFACE**

The study of election has occupied an important place in the domain of social science research. In India, both pre-poll predictions and post-poll analysis have gained popularity since late 1980s in research and media. Earlier these studies were centre on the national elections. Due to the emergence of regional politics and political parties, formation of ruling coalitions at national and state levels and polarisation of national political parties, the entire electoral politics of India started changing significantly. Earlier the electoral politics of the states was identical with the national politics. Gradually most of the states emerged as independent political units having their own conditions and environment to shape electoral politics and political participation of their people. This is the reason why the importance of studying the state-level elections has increased considering the uniqueness of each of the states in terms of the factors influencing the electoral process.

The present research is also an attempt to study electoral politics as political participation of the state of Assam as a federal unit of the Union of India. The 1985 election is made a reference point as the electoral politics in Assam gained a very remarkable momentum due to the emergence of regional party in a very significant way from that year. A significant deviation from national-level political influence started taking place in Assam. As, a single researcher cannot cover the whole of the state of Assam for the field study, the present research is limited within the Jorhat District of Upper Assam.

The thesis is presented in six interdependent chapters.

The first chapter contains the research problem, review of the literature, objectives of the study, significance and limitations of the study, methodology, hypothesis and a brief description of the chapters to be found in the thesis. An analysis of conceptual framework of electoral democracy and political participation in democracies of the world that derived from the writings of different social thinkers, research works etc. is also included in this chapter.

The second chapter covers areas like electoral democracy in India, political parties in the initial stage, delimitation of constituencies, election procedure, role of election commission and the changing trend of political participation in India with reference to some major democracies of the world. A discussion on the importance elections in democracies and growing significance of electoral studies in India is also presented in this chapter.

The third chapter is on political history and electoral politics in Assam starting from British annexation of Assam through Yandaboo Treaty in 1826 and its subsequent colonial rule up to constitution of first legislative assembly in Assam from 1937 to 1947. This chapter also has a discussion on the elections and trends of electoral participation since the first general election held in 1952 held in Assam. This chapter includes a comparative trend of political participation of national and state elections with special reference to Assam.

The fourth chapter is comprised of the study related to research area, i.e., Jorhat district of Assam. Starting with a general account of the district, this chapter includes an analysis of socio-economic composition of population of the district from the historical perspective. Since Jorhat district had been playing a very important role in India's freedom movement, therefore one independent unit is incorporated in this chapter on the role of Jorhat in India's freedom movement. There is another section in this chapter, which covers the geography,

climatology and demography of the district. Jorhat district is very much vibrant and sensitive to social situation and political issues. Some of these are being analysed in one unit of this chapter. Finally, an attempt is made to critically analyse the trend of electoral politics and political participation in all the assembly constituencies of the district.

The fifth chapter contains analysis of data collected from the field study with the help of different variables. The major findings are highlighted and the factors influencing the changing trend of electoral politics and political participation in the district are presented in this chapter.

In the last chapter, depending upon the analysis and objectives of the study, some suggestions are made which may be considered by election conducting machineries to strengthen the democratic institutions of the country. The political parties may adopt these suggestions and recommendations to make strategic mobilisation among the voters for more participation in the political process.

I hope that the present research work will be informative and useful for the students and research scholars in pursuing research in the field of electoral politics and political participation in future.

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## **ABBREVIATION**

ACK	Achik Asonna Chilchakgipa Kotak
AGP (P)	Asom Gana Parishad (Pragthisheel)
AGP	Asom Gana Parishad
AHL	All Party Hill Leaders Congress
AIFB	All India Forward Bloc
AIMF	All India Minorities Front
AITC	All India Trinamool Congress
AIUDF	All India United Democratic Front
AMB	Amra Bangalee
ASDC	Autonomous State Demand Committee
ASDC(P)	Autonomous State Demand Committee (Progressive)
ASDC(U)	Autonomous State Demand Committee (United)
AUDF	Assam United Democratic Front
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jan Sangh
BPF	Bodoland Peoples Front
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI (ML) (L)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Liberation)
FBL	All India Forward Block
HLC	All Party Hill Leaders Conference
HSKP	Hindusthan Suraksha Party
ICS	Indian Congress (Socialist)

IGL	All India Gorkha League
INC	Indian National Congress
INC (I)	Indian National Congress (I)
INC (O)	Indian National Congress (Organisation)
IND	Independent
JD (U)	Janata Dal (United)
JD(S)	Janata Dal (Secular)
JKNPP	Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party
JMM	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha
JNP	Janata Party
JS	Jan Sangh
LAC	Legislative Assembly Constituency
LB	Lok Bharati
LJNSP	Lok Jan Shakti Party
LJP	Lok Jan Shakti Party
LKD	Lok Dal
LKS	Loko Sanmilon
LS	Lok Shakti
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MOBC	More Other Backward Classes
MP	Member of Parliament
MUL	Muslim League Kerala State Committee
NBNP	Navbharat Nirman Party
NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
NLP	National Loktantrik Party
NNP	Navbharat Nirman Party
OBC	Other Backward Classes

PDF	People's Democratic Front
PSP	Praja Socialist Party
PTC	Plains Tribals Council of Assam
RCI	Revolutionary Communist Party of India
RCP	Revolutionary Communist Party
RCPI (R)	Revolutionary Communist Party of India (Rasik Bhatt)
RJD	Rashtriya Janata Dal
RPI	Republican Party of India
RSP	Revolutionary Socialist Party
SAP	Samata Party
SC	Schedule Caste
SHS	Shivsena
SJP(R)	Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya)
SOC	Socialist
SOP	Samyukta Socialist Party/Socialist Party
SP	Samajwadi Party
SSP	Sanghata Socialist Party
ST	Schedule Tribe
SUC	Socialist Unity Centre of India
SUCI	Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)
SWA	Swatantra Party
TNGP	Trinamool Gana Parishad
UBNLF	United Bodo Nationalist Liberation Front
UMFA	United Minorities Front, Assam
URMCA	United Reservation Movement Council of Assam
UTNLF	United Tribal Nationalists Liberation Front

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Indian democracy has not been inherited from its old traditions, rather from the liberal democracy that has been reinvented during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Western model of democracy has failed to evolve in India like other Asian, African and Latin American democracies.<sup>1</sup> Indian democracy has gradually taken its own course and shape in spite of all adverse conditions prevailing in Indian society compared to other countries.<sup>2</sup> Democracy in India has become more durable and functioning despite enormous diversities in terms of language, community, religion, culture, ethnicity along with economic inequalities and regional disparities. The growing consolidation of democratic process can be attributed mostly to the regular electoral process in India in both pre and post-independence period.

Holding of regular elections to form new governments can be considered as democratic minimum at least for ensuring procedural democracy, which has been largely successful in India. Elections in India have been able to gather greater and wider acceptance of the people, which had made democracy more strengthened and deep-rooted. Gradual increase of participations of the people in the electoral process of the country has made democracy more deepening and widening.

Indian democracy is translated into the expression of political participations through national state and local elections. After independence, Indian polity has been dominated by Congress-led governments not because of its election pledges but

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<sup>1</sup>Sunil, Khilnani. (1997). *Idea of India*, New Delhi: Penguin Group. p.17

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.p.25

mostly because of its populist policies for electoral mobilisation.<sup>3</sup> On most of the occasions, elections for electing governments were regulated not because of a plethora of promises made by the political parties during elections through its manifesto and agendas but because of single slogan, which proved to be more decisive and influential in shaping the minds of electorates.

If we look at the elections, we can identify that slogans played an important role in during the elections.<sup>4</sup> For example, it was “Garibi Hatao” (remove poverty) in 1971. In 1977, it was ‘Emergency Hatao’ (Congress party was responsible for the 1975-77 political scenario), ‘Janata Hatao’ in 1980 to replace Janata government for its continuous instability.<sup>5</sup> It was ‘Des Bachao’ (save the country) in 1984 after the assassination Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. In 1989, the campaign for ‘Corruption Hatao’ was to remove Congress government for its alleged involvement in Bofors scandal, etc. In 2014 Lok Sabha election Bharatiya Janata Party used several popular slogans. For example, ‘Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat’ (One India, Great India), ‘Time for Change,’ ‘Sabka Sath Sabka Vikash’, ‘Har Har Modi Ghar Ghar Modi’ etc.<sup>6</sup> In most of the time, such slogans rather than the core and fundamental issues confronted by the society at its various levels have determined the course of electoral politics and trend of participation of people in the electoral process. Democracy in India is thus ‘a phenomenon’ that, argues commentator, ‘by most accounts, should not have existed, flourished or indeed long endured’.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Babul, Fadia. (1984). *Stale Politics in India*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers 155-Kalkaji. pp. 20-30

<sup>4</sup>S. H, Rudolph. (1987). *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State*, New Delhi: Orient Longman. pp. 40-55

<sup>5</sup>[ncert.nic.in/ncert/l/leps206.pdf](http://ncert.nic.in/ncert/l/leps206.pdf) [Accessed 20/12/2017]

<sup>6</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27018561> [Accessed 20/12/2017]

<sup>7</sup>Mehta, Pratap Bhanu. (2003). *The Burden of Democracy*, New Delhi: Penguin. p. 2

## 1.1 Research Problem

Indian electoral politics has evolved through different stages. After independence, in the initial stage the Congress party was the only dominating party with competitiveness in terms electoral politics of the country. The participation of the people in the electoral process was less than 50 percentages, and presence of political parties was limited. In the first general election, there were 53 political parties with total number of 1874 candidates including independents. This election had only 44.87 polling percentage.<sup>8</sup> Gradually there has been increase in number of political parties contesting in the election with large number of contesting candidates and more people's participation.

The last Lok Sabha election held in 2014 had total number of 464 political parties with 8251 number of contesting candidates including independents. This election had 66.30 polling percentage.<sup>9</sup> There were some phenomenal developments in electoral politics in India during this election. An account in this regard is given in due place in a subsequent chapter of this thesis.

The states have gradually acquired more prominent position in the federal spectrum of India during its existence as a republic. The electoral politics at the state level become more significant after the breakdown of Congress dominance in the late 1960s. The gradual emergence of state based political parties during 1980s has made the federal politics of India more divergent and competitive.

According to James Manor, "different party systems have taken shapes in different states and electoral outcomes had begun to differ from state to state in the 1980s and

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<sup>8</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1952, New Delhi: Government of India, 1952 ([www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in) /Accessed 30/12/2017)

<sup>9</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 2014, New Delhi: Government of India, 2014 ([www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in) /Accessed 30/12/2017)



90s bringing a great deal of diversity among the states”.<sup>10</sup> In Assam, the emergence of regional party, the AGP (Asom Gana Parisad) after the 6 years long Assam Agitation has given a new direction to her politics. After the independence like other Indian states, the Congress Party dominated Assam Politics for most of the times. From 1985 the electoral politics of Assam witnessed deep-rooted change and politics of the state became more competitive in its nature and character for emergence of different socio political issues and groups. It is noteworthy that for the first time the history of electoral politics of Assam witnessed 79.84 percentage of voter’s turnout in 1985 elections. Apart from AGP, some other regional parties have come into existence representing different regional, ethnic and religious group in Assam. This had made the politics of Assam more polarised compared to pre 1985 conditions.<sup>11</sup>

The present research is undertaken by adopting 1985 Assembly election of Assam as a landmark in terms of change in electoral politics and political participation in the state. The study has been designed to understand different factors, which have influenced in the electoral politics and political participation in Assam which made the democratic politics of the state distinctive compared to other states of the country.

As it is stated, the electoral politics and political participation of Assam present an important area of political research. For the convenience of an extensive study, the Jorhat district of the state has been strategically selected which gives a distinctive nature of the whole of the state in this direction. In this regard, justifications are given in the appropriate place in this research work. The topic of the whole research work in

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<sup>10</sup>Manor, James. (1981). Party decay and political crisis in India. *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer. p. 26.

<sup>11</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1985, New Delhi: Government of India, 1985 [www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in) [Accessed 30/12/2017]

concise term could be read as **“Electoral Politics and Political Participation in Assam: A study of Jorhat District”**.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

- To draw an outline of electoral history of Assam in general and Jorhat district in Particular.
- To analyse the factors influencing the electoral politics of Jorhat district
- To analyse the factors influencing political participation in Jorhat district
- To recommend suggestions to increase people’s participation in the electoral process.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

- Whether participation of the people increases in the electoral process due to faith in the democratic system?
- Does the increasing participation of the people influence in the electoral process and election outcomes?

## **1.4 Hypothesis**

- The Political Participation of the people has increased for their growing faith in the democratic system.
- Electoral Politics of Jorhat district is not different from rest of Assam.

## 1.5 Review of Literature

Study of elections in India is a challenging task because of its geographical area and size of population. It becomes more complicated if one takes into consideration the linguistic, cultural, ethnic, religious diversities of Indian society. In spite of all these challenges, the study of elections gained its momentum since the late 80s in terms of both pre-poll predictions and post-poll analysis. From this moment a new era of Indian democratic politics has emerged which is characterised by the importance of regional politics and political parties, formation of ruling coalition at national and regional levels and polarisation of national politics around the Congress, the BJP and the Third Front.

These study of literature show diverse disciplines, methods, authors, institutions and support for election studies in India. However, all these studies have two different approaches, one is the case studies and the other is survey research with a number of publications. The case study approach is limited to a particular political territory, which can be a city, village, the constituency, the district or the state, etc. This method was developed to study Indian election by Paul Brass for his long interest in the politics of Uttar Pradesh. He writes, Indeed in the case study approach, the detailed observations of elections in a particular are aims at uncovering processes and dynamics, which are relevant for a much wider territory.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Brass, Paul. (1985). *Caste, Faction and Party in Indian Politics. Volume Two: Election Studies*, Delhi: Chanakya Publications. pp. 240-255

Apart from political science, anthropology also adopted the case study approach but they focus on more limited political territory. Anthropologists concentrate mainly on questioning the meaning of electoral process to the voters.<sup>13</sup>

A number of articles and books on Indian elections combine different methodological approaches. Ahuja and Chibber had made an interesting study both quantitative and qualitative methods (i.e. election surveys [1989-2004] and a series of focus group discussions) in three large states of India.<sup>14</sup> To understand the particular pattern of electoral turnout described by Yadav as characteristic of the 'second democratic upsurge' (Yadav 2000),<sup>15</sup> Ahuja and Chibber identify three broad social groups defined by distinct interpretations of voting. Thus the act of voting is considered as a right by the groups who are on the lower end of social spectrum - the marginalized, as an instrument to gain access to the state and its resources by those in the middle of the spectrum and as civic duty by those at the top- the elites (Ahuja and Chibber 2009; 1-9).<sup>16</sup> Another approach to study elections where one finds a number of monographs devoted to a single election. For example, Myron Weiner's study of the 1977 election that constitutes an interesting account of the end of congress party dominance in Indian politics, with his first part devoted to the campaign and the second part devoted to the analysis of election results.

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<sup>13</sup>Sundar, Nandini, Deshpande, Satish, Uberoi, Patrici. (2000). 'Indian Anthropology and Sociology: Towards a History', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 10 June, pp. 1998-2002.

<sup>14</sup>Ahuja, Amit; Chhibber, Pradeep (eds) 'Civic Duty, Empowerment and Patronage: Patterns of Political Participation in India', <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/cpworkshop/papers/Chhibber.pdf> [Accessed on 21/11/09]. pp. 3-15

<sup>15</sup>Yadav, Yogendra. (2000). 'Understanding the Second Democratic Upsurge: Trends of Bahujan Participation in Electoral Politics in the 1990s', in Francine R. Frankel; Zoya Hasan; Rajeev Bhargava; Balveer Arora (eds.), *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*, Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 20-150

<sup>16</sup>Ahuja, Chibber, 2009. p. 9

A series of collected volumes were published on parliamentary election (for instance Roy & Wallace, 1999)<sup>17</sup> in 1990s based on aggregate data provided mainly by Election Commission of India. They offer a series of papers that are interpretative, speculative and critical in nature.<sup>18</sup> A book by Wendy Singer (2007) makes a case for social history of elections by studying a large number of materials relating to national, state and local elections.<sup>19</sup>

Survey method has become dominating in election studies since 1990s. Yadav defines this method as a technique of data gathering in which a sample of respondents is asked questions about their political preferences and belief to draw a conclusion about political opinions, attitudes and behaviour of a wider population of citizens.<sup>20</sup> This type of research establishes a close relationship between media and political science. An economist turned journalist, Eric Da Costa in the late 1950s, introduced it in India.<sup>21</sup> He is considered as ‘the father of opinion polling in India’ who went to work with the Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO) established in 1956. Later political scientists such as Bashiruddin Ahmed, Ramashray Roy and Rajni Kothari added a scientific approach to his efforts. Kothari went to Michigan University to be trained in survey research and to develop expertise in psephology.<sup>22</sup> When he came back, Rajni Kothari founded the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in 1963 to

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<sup>17</sup>Roy, Ramashray, Wallace, Paul. (1999). *Indian Politics and the 1998 Election: Regionalism, Hindutva and State Politics*, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications. pp. 90-105

<sup>18</sup>Note: ‘Chronicle of an Impossible Election’—i.e. the 2002 Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir - as told by the then Chief Election Commissioner, J.M. Lyngdoh (2004), which provides an insider’s view of how election procedures are the result of a series of (sometimes minute) decisions—aiming at asserting that the Election Commission does not represent the Indian government.

<sup>19</sup>Singer, Wendy. (2007). *A Constituency Suitable for Ladies’ and Other Social Histories of Indian Elections*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 20-30

<sup>20</sup>Yadav, Yogendra (2008) ‘Whether Survey Research? Reflections on the State of Survey Research on Politics in Most of the World’, Malcom Adiseshiah Memorial Lecture, Chennai. pp. 7-90

<sup>21</sup>Note- Eric Da Costa founded the *International Journal of Public Opinion* in 2006. (URL:[https://watermark.silverchair.com/intpor\\_2006\\_18\\_3\\_-toc.pdf?](https://watermark.silverchair.com/intpor_2006_18_3_-toc.pdf?) [Accessed on 24/04/18])

<sup>22</sup>Eldersveld, Samuel, Ahmed, Bashiruddin. (1978). *Citizens and Politics: Mass Political Behaviour in India*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 30-56

apply his newly acquired expertise.<sup>23</sup> Starting with the Kerala state elections in 1965, CSDS conducted a series of election studies in both national and state level elections. Another new direction to the election studies in India was added by academic-turned-journalist Prannoy Roy who learnt survey research in United Kingdom.<sup>24</sup> After coming back, he applied this method in studying Indian elections. He co-authored a number of volumes with Bulter and Lahiri conducted a series of all India opinion polls for the magazine *India Today*.<sup>25</sup> However, he popularised psephology in India by his newly founded television channel, New Delhi television (NDTV) in 1998.<sup>26</sup> A link between two pioneering studies pertaining to electoral politics and political participation has assumed great importance during the last four decades throughout the world specifically in America and Europe. In electoral politics, serious studies and research on specific issues concerning election have been a recent phenomenon.<sup>27</sup> However, thoughts and contributing works in this field as initiated by the political scientists and sociologists have been quite significant. It is a fact that, although studies in this area in disaggregated form the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century a systematic problem oriented study and research have begun only from 1960. After 1960s, there has been more and more methodological innovations in the study of electoral politics and some older methodologies were refined to suit the needs of the situation. It is true that work on

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<sup>23</sup>Note: - The CSDS was meant, in Kothari's own words: 'One, to give a truly empirical base to political science [...] Two, to engage in a persistent set of writings through which our broad conceptualization of democracy in India was laid out [...] And three, institutionalize not just the Centre as a place of learning but as part of the larger intellectual process itself' (Kothari 2002: 39-40). Over the years, the CSDS has retained a unique place in the Indian academia, as it remains distinct from universities even while engaging in a number of collaborations with their faculty—Lokniti being a case in point.

<sup>24</sup>Rao, Bhaskara. (2009). *A Handbook of Poll Surveys in Media: An Indian Perspective*, Delhi: Gyan Publications. pp. 26-35

<sup>25</sup>Butler, David, Lahiri, Roy, and Prannoy. (eds), (1995). *India Decides. Elections 1952-1995*. Delhi: Books & Things. p. 45-96

<sup>26</sup>Shah, A.M. (2007). 'Introduction', in A.M. Shah (ed.), *The Grassroots of Democracy: Field Studies of Indian Elections*. Delhi: Permanent Black. pp. 1-27.

<sup>27</sup>Fauvelle, Aymar, and Christine. (2008). 'Electoral turnout in Johannesburg Socio-economic and Political Determinants', *Transformation, Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 66/67, pp. 142-67.

electoral politics, and political participation are still quite limited.<sup>28</sup> Although the political scientists in India have done a good number of studies, yet they are mostly related to election results, voting pattern, party organization and political mobilization. Systematic research works on electoral politics or on election, results and behavior have not taken any extensive shape in the country. In India, some social scientists like Ajay K Mehra Ali Sadig (1959), Babul Fadia (1984), R.L. Gupta (1988), Sucheela Kaushik (1982), Rajni Kothari (1989), and K.L. Kamal (1990), Surinder Sure (1962) have contributed to the electoral studies.

Studies on electoral Politics and electoral participation with reference to the State of Assam are still in an initial stage. However, some macro-and micro-level works on socio-economic status of electorates and their role on electoral politics in Assam carried out by scholars like V. Venkata Rao, Abu Nasar Said Ahmed, Niru Hazarika, Monirul Hussain, Sandhya Goswami, Nani Gopal Mahanta, Akhil Ranjan Dutta, Sibani Choube are worth mentioning. However, most of these works are done taking only one election into consideration which cannot articulate any trend of electoral politics of the state. Moreover, these works are based on descriptive analysis of the problems of electorates or changing trends of electoral politics in the state in historical, socio-economic and sociological perspective, only a few works contain empirical data. Most of these works were published in form of commentaries or articles not in form of books.

In Assam, V.V Rao tried to establish the foundation of electoral research during the 1980s. His approach to electoral studies was mainly sociological. A review of some

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.pp. 175-209

selected books and articles on electoral politics and political participation in Assam was taken into account during the present research is given below.

To get a direction in the present research, some selected literature reviews have been done regarding electoral politics in India and Assam which are mentioned below:

## **Books**

**Abu Nasar Said Ahmed, Jaydeep Baruah, Ratna Bhuyan: “*Election Politics in Assam, Issues trends and People’s Mandate*”:**<sup>29</sup> This is a book on analysis of elections from 1978 to 2001. The authors of the book have systematically analysed the issues, trends and people’s mandate in Assam in its elections during the period. The issues like emergence of regional parties, gradual inroad of BJP apart from issues related to insurgency are well discussed in the book. How the emergence of ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam), Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) and other insurgent outfits influenced the trends of electoral politics of the state has also been critically analysed in the book. Apart from insurgency, the authors have raised many other issues, which have influence the trends of electoral politics in the state. Some of these major issues are flood and influx of foreign national have always remained ornamental as parties take up these issues at time of election to be forgotten soon after the polling day. The book has made special reference to 2001 assembly election where 1.5 corers people enrolled in the updated voters list out of a total population of 2.2 corers in the state. The authors have identified this election as important because of the failure of AGP, the regional party in its second term in power. The issues like IMDT Act played a very vital role in this election supported by the issues of

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<sup>29</sup>Ahmed, A., Baruah, J. and Bhuyan, R. (2006). *Election politics in Assam Issues Trends and People's Mandate*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House.



corruption, unemployment, non-payment of salaries to the government employees, decline of public sector cooperation's like ASTC (Assam State Transport Corporation) etc. During the AGPs rule, corruption charges were raised against the chairman of Assam Public Service Commission, Tara Pada Das. Das did not resign from his office in spite of the fact that valuables, illegal assets and cash worth several Lakhs were recovered from his office. Besides the teaching community of the state were severely affected during the AGPs period for non-payment of salaries for months after months, which was one of the major causes of AGP defeat in this election. The authors of the book have analysed the economic scenario of the state and tried to make some conclusion how this economic condition directly or indirectly influence the political trends of the state. The book is based on secondary data collected from different sources with a qualitative analysis. The authors have generalised some issues influencing the trend of electoral politics in Assam ignoring the impact of socio cultural issues like caste community factors, ethnicity, religion etc.

**Ajit Kumar Dutta and Saumita Pujari (eds.): “Jorhator Itihakh.”:**<sup>30</sup> This edited volume includes the history of Jorhat from pre historic age to the recent time. One important chapter on role of Jorhat in freedom struggle written by Ajit Kumar Dutta has been edited in this book where the author has systematically discussed on the contribution of the people of Jorhat in different phases of freedom struggle of the country. The writer of the chapter has shown how people of the district protested against different anti people policy and decision of the British government. The book is comprised of writings collected from many eminent personalities of the region. It is

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<sup>30</sup>Dutta, Ajit. And P, Saumita. (2016). *Jorhator Itihaz. Jorhat: Jorhat: Jorhat Itihaz Anusandhan Samitte.*

a reflection of history, politics, economy, culture and society of the district both in pre and post independent period. The book portrays how different caste and community people have been living together for generation after generation in the area. In spite of political differences, people are working together for the betterment of the area, which shows a political maturity of the people of Jorhat. However, the book is a good historical document but the editors have failed to incorporate some of the major issues, which have influence the socio economic and political life of the people of the district.

**Anup Kumar Das:** “*The Political Elite in a Developing Society*”:<sup>31</sup> This study explores some of the social characteristics of the career-oriented political elite in the present-day India. In this book, Das tries to answer these very pertinent questions about the political elite within the framework of a changing social structure of a developing democracy. Based on the data derived from interviews held with elites (empirically identified through the positional approach), this study is developed around such major themes as the social origin and composition of the elite, their self-conception, personal traits and subjective attitudes and orientations. This book is an original contribution to the theory of elite building in a developing society, especially the functioning of an important part of the political class in a developing society. Elites are the creative and energetic forces of the society. As the prime movers, they decide the fate of any society in a considerable measure. Although this is true of all societies, elites assume a greater importance in the context of developing societies. However, how permeable is the elite? What effects democratization has on the elite structure of the society in terms of its exclusiveness and self-interpretation? How elite

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<sup>31</sup>Das, A.K. (1994). *The Political Elite in a Developing Society*. New Delhi: Academic Foundation India

function and what is their strain? What is its character like in terms of psychic makeup? The author has tried to find out answers to such questions.

**Pratap Bardhan: “Democracy and Distributive Politics in India”:**<sup>32</sup> In this book author found that although constitutionally Centre is more powerful in India yet the present electoral politics has brought a new trend where coalition has become essential and the help of regional political parties play an important role in policy making in the Central Government. He writes, “Regional parties also negotiate support in exchange for additional fiscal transfers to particular states. A significant part of the central transfers to the states has always been discretionary (like the numerous central sector and centrally sponsored schemes earmarked for objectives like poverty alleviation), not linked to revenue raising efforts by the state governments.” According to him there are several ways in which the historical and social origins of democracy in India are sharply different from those in much of the West, and the indigenous political culture has fundamentally reshaped the processes of democracy. These differences are reflected in the current functioning of democracy in India and its impact on distributive politics, making it somewhat difficult to fit the Indian case to the canonical cases in the usual theories of democracy.

#### **Articles on Electoral Politics and Political Participation in India**

**Basanta Bora: “On the Electoral Process”:**<sup>33</sup> In this article, the author has tried to evaluate the factors that attracted people towards the electoral process with special reference to 2009 Lok Sabha election. The author has mentioned two important

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<sup>32</sup>Pratab, Bardhan. (2008). *Democracy and Distributive Politics in India*, Shapiro, P. Swenson and D. Donno (eds.), *Divide and Deal, The Politics of Distribution in Democracies*, New York: New York University Press.

<sup>33</sup>Bora, B. (2009). On the Electoral Process. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(39), 105-107. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25663606>

highlights of this election, firstly- the elections held following a fresh delimitation of constituencies after more than three decades. Secondly, the issue of electoral rolls with voters' photographs was taken into consideration. In the article it was examined how these two factors have influenced both political participation and electoral outcome of 2009 Lok Sabha election. The multiple challenges that have faced in conducting elections in India due to its gigantic magnitude are also discussed in this article.

**H. Srikanth: “Communalising Assam - AGPs Loss is BJP's Gain”:**<sup>34</sup> In this commentary, the author has discussed how the emergence of regionalism in Assam prevented BJP in spreading out their Hindutva agenda continuously for two decades. The author has closely pointed out that the poor performance of AGPs government created an advantageous position for BJP's inroad to Assam. Issues like polarization in the politics of Assam have been the central focus of this commentary. The author has identified Muslim fundamentalism as one of the major reasons for which BJP could firm their footing in the politics of Assam. Because of this factor, Bengali and Assamese caste Hindus could be united by BJP for its political gain. BJP was more benefited by the continuous failure of the regional party, AGP than the failure of Congress according to author. But there are many other factors which are responsible for BJP's gain in Assam which have not been taken up by the author in this commentary.

**Imtiaz Ahmed: “Election in India”:**<sup>35</sup> In this special article, the author critically reviewed the contributions of election studies conducted in India towards the precise

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<sup>34</sup>H. Srikanth. (1999). Communalising Assam: AGP's Loss Is BJP's Gain. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(49), 3412-3414. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4408677>

<sup>35</sup>Ahmad, I. (1977). Election Studies in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 12(39), 1677-1680. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4365960>

formulation of electoral behaviour of Indian electorates. In spite of having involvement of huge quantum of national resources involved in the whole enterprise of the election studies their predictive capability is limited. Long-term view of the process of polarisation of electorates and the development of India's political system is very rare in these studies. So there is a need to change the approach to election studies, as the author argues.

**K. C. Suri: “Democracy Economic Reforms and Election in India”:**<sup>36</sup> In this article, the author has given an analysis on relationship between economic reforms and election results in India. In the paper, the author has used the term economic reforms and linearization interchangeably. The author argues that the National Election Studies (NES) has not enabled scholars and researchers to establish a causal relationship between the impact of reforms and voting behaviours. There should be efforts to identify the election results with economic reforms undertaken by an incumbent government because of the growing tension between democracy and reform agenda for the gap between people's aspiration and government policy. Under these circumstances it becomes interesting to see how government can withstand the pressure from outside to respond to the pressure from the below.

**K. C. Suri: “Democratic Power and Electoral Political in Andhra Pradesh, India”:**<sup>37</sup> In his study, K.C. Suri has critically analyzed the changing political scenario in post-independence India. He points out the challenges that faced by Indian democracy for simultaneously changes in different areas like reformation in social structure, promotion of agriculture and industrial development and fostering

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<sup>36</sup>Suri, K. (2004). Democracy, Economic Reforms and Election Results in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(51), 5404-5411. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4415923>

<sup>37</sup><https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/2690.pdf> [Accessed on 20/10/2017]

democratic political institution at the same time. He has also looked into the importance of the study of election as a means to understand the political process. He stated, "Election have influenced the ways in which, the priorities of political parties and the broad parameters of the incumbent government were laid down". According to him, election have assumed further significance as hundreds of millions of voters living under condition of illiteracy, poverty, backwardness, pre-modern social relation, religious distinctions and inequalities based on a caste build society over the years were called upon to choose their representatives at the central state and local levels. He also stated that either election in India would fail because of the awesome structural limitation and unpreparedness of the country to institutionalize parliamentary democracy or they would have establishing consequences, which the political elites could not control, proved wrong.

**Manuranjan Mohanty: "Democracy Limited":**<sup>38</sup> In this commentary Mohanty has tried to examine the adherence of major political power to majoritarianism. The author has pointed out that democracy is undergoing a serious redefinition for worst in contemporary India. He has stated that democracy is not majoritarianism, it is a participatory system of self-governance based on the principles of equality, freedom, justice and region. Even when a decision is made by majority principle, it has to respect the rights and viewpoint of minority. Therefore, a transition in Indian democracy is necessary to accommodate all sections of the society whether minority or majority.

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<sup>38</sup>Mohanty, M. (1996). Democracy Limited. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(13), 804-805. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4403960>

**Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi: “Electoral Politics in Post Conflict Societies - Case of Punjab”:**<sup>39</sup> In this article, the authors have given a thorough analysis of electoral politics in the state of Punjab in post conflict situation. After prolonged domination of violence in the 1980s, the socio-political condition of Punjab changed largely. Authors in the article tried to see the political agenda of both major parties like the Akali Dal and the Congress were change under this environment. The influence of cultural politics has been observed in the article. The major issues as return to peace, elimination of corruption, need for a religious Punjab was critically examined in this article.

**S. Patagundi: “Political Cultural Dimensions of Indian Democracy in the Era of Globalization in India”:**<sup>40</sup> Globalization influences the process of political socialization. In this study, there is an attempt to understand the relation between political culture and the working of Indian democracy in the era of globalization. This involves the study of democratic culture, mass and elite political culture and social justice as a value of the Indian society. The author discusses how destruction of local culture and growth of populist culture are manifested in the working of Indian democracy. Political culture comes into operation at the time of elections and is manifested in various forms such as opposition or support to a specific political party or group of parties. It is generally found that globalization has a significant bearing on peoples’ thinking about politics. A major finding of this study is that globalization has a very significant bearing on the process of the modification of the Indian political culture reflecting it in the working of the Indian democracy.

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<sup>39</sup>Priyadasrhi, P & C. Neera, (2006). Electoral Politics in Post Conflict Societies - Case of Punjab. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41

<sup>40</sup>S. Patagundi, Political Cultural Dimensions of Indian Democracy in the Era of Globalization, International Political Science Association Research Committee on Political Socialization and Education (IPSA/RCPSE) RC21, December, 2009

**Sandeep Sastri: “Citizen Confidence in Political Institution and Process in India: Some Findings from the World Values Survey”:**<sup>41</sup>

In this article, the author has examined to what extent the political institution of India enjoys the confidence of its citizens, which indicates the way in which these institutions function. The author has analysed the functioning of democratic political institution using the data collected from the Indian component of World Values Survey (1999-2002). The author has pointed out that the health of a democratic political institution depends on the faith and confidence it enjoys from the people for whom it stands for.

**Sushas Paliskar, and K.C. Suri: “India’s 2014 Lok Sabha Election: Critical Shift in the Long Term, Caution in the Short Time”:**<sup>42</sup>

Paliskar and Suri in this article have critically analyzed the 2014 Lok Sabha election in India. They have tried to examine the factors of BJP’s success and Congress’s decline in this election. The authors have examined how BJP changed its strategy from ideological agenda to a social coalition to reach out all castes, community and classes of people. It has been mentioned here that 2014 election had both long term and a short-term effect in Indian politics. BJP’s gain in non-Hindi speaking areas of the country made the party to emerge as a national party in the sense of the term having representation from almost all the states and federal units more particularly J & K, Assam and West Bengal etc. The article has a categorical explanation of party performance in caste and community levels based on National Election Survey.

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<sup>41</sup>Sastri, Sandip. (2002). Citizen Confidence in Political Institution and Process in India, *Indian Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 63. No 1 pp89-104

<sup>42</sup>K.C, Suri, Paliskar. S. (2014). Critical Shifts in the Long Term, Caution in the Short Term: India 2.14 Election, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39.



**Sushas Paliskar: “Participatory Norm, How Broad-based is It?”**<sup>43</sup> Through this article, the author has critically analysed the broadness of political participation in India. He has argued that in India, active participation in the political process is still under the grip of a privileged section of people with education and good economic background. Though people from OBCs have made an entry into active politics in recent years yet Dalits, Adivashis, women and the poor still remain largely at the periphery. That is why participation of more people in the politics as witness in the recent election does not automatically ensure the entry of less privileged section into the political process.

**Udayan, Misra: “Assam Election Setback for Left”.**<sup>44</sup> This article is prepared with reference to 2001 assembly election in Assam. The author has critically analysed how the left parties once a viable force in the state were wiped out because of their own blunder. The author identified that the act of left in making understanding with the regional party, the AGP which has lost its credential due to rampant corruption and mis-governance was a great mistake for which CPI and CPM could not win a single seat in 2001 election.

**Yogendra Yadav: “Reconfiguration of Indian Politics - State Assembly Election, 1993-95”.**<sup>45</sup> In this article, Yadav has clearly pointed out the different phases of Indian electoral politics starting from the first phase of single party dominance to the post Congress era of competitive party politics during the 1993 to 1995. He has made special review of assembly elections held during 1993 to 1995 where he analyzed how there has been unprecedented participation of the people in the democratic

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<sup>43</sup>Paliskar, Suhas. (2006). Participatory Norm, how broad based is it? *Economic and Political weekly*. Vol. 39. No. 51 pp. 5412-5417

<sup>44</sup>Misra, Udayan. (2001). Assam Election Setback for the left. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Jun 9

<sup>45</sup>Yadav, Y. (1996). Reconfiguration in Indian Politics: State Assembly Elections, 1993-95. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(2/3), 95-104. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4403675>

process. He has termed this as the second “**Democratic Upsurge**” in India. According to him, electoral participation has come to stand for political participation in a way it never did before. The increasing silence attached to the act of voting as the privilege symbol or the defining moment of citizenship is unrelated to a slide towards its becoming a momentary symbol and the surrounding area of electoral consultation is at least partly due to the striking institutional space for non-electoral modes of efficacious political activity.

#### **Articles on Electoral Politics and Political Participation with reference to Assam**

**Jogendra Kumar Das: “Assam, the Post-Colonial Political Development”:**<sup>46</sup> Prof.

Das in his article has given detailed accounts of major political development in Assam during the post-independence period. Starting from anti grouping movements to the development of regionalism along with major issues had been thoroughly described in this article. The author has made discussion on different socio political movements and emergence of insurgent activities to see their influence on political development of the state.

**Monirul Hussain: “Governance and Electoral Process in India’s North-east”:**<sup>47</sup>

In this article, the author has made an analysis of the governance process in North-East India. The role of the governments in negotiating with different insurgent groups in North-East India has been critically examined. In the first part of the article, the peacekeeping process with the extremist groups has been seen and in the next part, the author has tried to analyze the influence of this peacekeeping process in different elections for Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the states of Northeast. The author

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<sup>46</sup>Das, J. (2005). Assam: The Post-Colonial Political Developments. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 66(4), 873-900. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856173>

<sup>47</sup>Monirul Hussain. (2003). Governance and Electoral Processes in India's North-East. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(10), 981-990. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413311>

concluded that due to incompetence of governments in the Northeastern states the democracy has suffered a lot. There was a remarkable decline in the quality of governance and emergence of different insurgent outfits and as a result, democracy has been compromised largely in the region.

**Nani Gopal Mahanta: “Assam Politics of Peace Making”:**<sup>48</sup> In this article, the author has attempted to analyze different efforts made by the central and state governments in resolving the insurgency problem in the state of Assam. He argues how most of the governments and political parties have been trying to gain power in the name of negotiating with the insurgent groups in Assam. Prof. Mahanta stated that no party or the government try to address the problem of insurgency of the region once for all. They always try to make politics out of some kind of stability and uncertainty. However, the author did not make any analysis of the influence of the insurgency factor in politics of Assam.

**Nani Gopal Mahanta; “Democracy and Electoral Politics: From Procedural and Substantive Democracy.”:** In this seminar paper Dr. Mahanta states that procedural aspects of democracy are ornamental which does not make democracy substantive or qualitative. He referred to some primordial factors, which influence the procedural front of democracy in India. He identified five major factors of procedural democracy i) dominance of ethnicity, religion, and language and caste ii) use of money and muscle power by the elite section in Indian electoral democracy iii) candidate factor which includes behavior, charisma etc. iv) influence of political party and v) development agenda. Dr. Mahanta criticized the growing money power in politics. Based on statistical data he showed the relative possibility of candidates getting

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<sup>48</sup>Nani Gopal Mahanta. (2005). Politics of Peace-Making. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(1), 25-27. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4416004>

tickets/being re-elected according to their income. Thus, winning elections is merely a reflection of electoral management. He argues that electoral democracy strengthens the procedural front of democracy but for achieving the goal of a qualitative democracy has to work more. However, in this paper Dr. Mahanta has not suggested the possible ways through which quality of democracy could be improved.<sup>49</sup>

**Sandhya, Goswami: “Assam a Fractured Verdict”:**<sup>50</sup> The author of this article has attempted to look at the social patterns of voting in Assam by analyzing the verdict of the 2009 Lok Sabha elections in the state. The social pattern reflects a significant transformation in the alignment of social groups displaying a deep-rooted fractured politics with almost every community asserting its identity. Ideology seemed to have taken a back seat as political parties opted for state level analysis with the intent of bowstring individual. Prof. Goswami has analyzed how politics of Assam has been polarized in communal and linguistic dimension. She has showed while Muslims shifted their loyalty to AIUDF, the Assamese speaking Muslims remain with the Congress and more than three fourths of Bangla speaking Muslims supported the AIUDF. Similarly, among the Hindus 60 percentage of Assamese speaking Hindus voted for AGP- BJP alliance and Congress got reasonable support among the Bangla speaking Hindus (46 Percentage). Prof. Goswami shows how there has been a Sharpe polarization in linguistic direction in 2009 Lok Sabha election in the state. However, the author has not mention any point regarding gradual consolidation of BJP and AIUDF due to such polarization.

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<sup>49</sup> [onlineministries.creighton.edu/.../NESRC/SEMINAR%20REPORT%20ENGLISH.doc](http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/.../NESRC/SEMINAR%20REPORT%20ENGLISH.doc) [Accessed 21/12/17]

<sup>50</sup> S, Gosami. (2009). Assam A Fractured Verdict. *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol. 44. No. 39.

**Sandhya, Goswami: “Changing Electoral Trends”:**<sup>51</sup> In this article, Prof. Goswami has made a thorough discussion on changing electoral trends in Assam with reference to the election during 1985 to 1999. It is an attempt to understand the trend of electoral politics in the state with the emergence of regional political parties and BJP. The author is of the opinion that there have been spectacular changes in Assam politics from 1985. The BJP and AGPs poll alliance has made some fundamental changes in socio-political and economic domain of the state. Prof. Goswami has analysed how AGP lost its three former allies, the CPI, CPI (M) and United People Party (UPP) for joining hands with BJP. AGP-BJP alliance however has managed to come to an understanding with the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and Haliram Terang fraction of the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC). Prof. Goswami states that the alliances between AGP and BJP have gradually changed the trend of electoral politics in the state of Assam. However, there is no any clear analysis of AGPs loss and gain due to this alliance in this article.

**Akhil Ranjan Dutta: “BJP’s Electoral Victory in Assam, 2016: Co-opting the Khilonjiyas”:**<sup>52</sup> In his article Prof. Dutta illustriously explains about the factors behind BJP’s electoral victory in 2016 Assembly elections in Assam. He argues that entering into a rainbow coalition, BJP could unite most of the tribal and non-tribal ethnic groups in the name of Khilongiya against the continuous cross boarder influx from the neighbouring countries which have gradually change ethnic demographic pattern of the state. Another important factor has helped BJP to win the electoral battle is the use of local cultural icons and media. In spite of its dubious stand on the

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<sup>51</sup>Sandhya Goswami. (2001). Changing Electoral Trends. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(19), 1584-1586. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4410597>

<sup>52</sup> Dutta, A.R. (2017). BJP’s Electoral Victory in Assam, 2016: Co-opting the Khilonjiyas. *Social Change*, New Delhi: Sage Publication. [DOI:10.1177/0049085716683114]

Hindu Bangladeshi issue, BJP could very strategically project itself as the real friends of indigenous people which led to its unprecedented victory in the assembly election in 2016, Prof. Dutta argues.

### **General Articles on Electoral Politics**

**Julia Rozanova's: "Public Service Broadcasting as a Medium of Political Socialization: Quo Vadis?":**<sup>53</sup> Recent years have witnessed rising concern about the future of democracy, and the decline of public service broadcasting (PSB) has been named among the challenges. In a global move to neo-liberalism, the territory belonging to public service broadcasting is shrinking with less government investment. This paper tries to challenge the libertarian critique of PSB as a medium of political socialization from the Right, which asserts at proliferation of information channels eliminating the need for PSB and that an individual need to be left on his/her own to freely process the abundant information. It also revisits the critique of PSB as a medium of political socialization from the Left, which points out that being in control of PSB, the bourgeois state cannot with necessity ensure that it truly serves the public interest and PSB may potentially be a hegemonic tool for ideological control by the state. Bringing in the experience of the Russian TV system this paper adds a new dimension to the study of media as an instrument of political socialization and its implications for democracy.

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<sup>53</sup><http://docplayer.net/38497285-Public-service-broadcasting-as-a-medium-of-political-socialization-quo-vadis-julia-rozanova-university-of-alberta.html> [Accessed 20/5/2017]

**Olivier Giraud's: "New Forms of Subjectivation and Political Socialization Facing New Contents and Forms of Governance in Education Systems":**<sup>54</sup> 'Some Preliminary Comparative Elements from the English and the French Cases' is an important essay in the context of political socialization. This article analyses the emerging tensions in education systems in the context of globalization. Based on empirical research comparing the cases of England and France, it draws attention on the implications of both the transformation and diversification of subjectivities and political socialization modes in contemporary societies and of the transformation of the education contents and governance forms in these both countries. Departing from very different starting positions, the trajectories of both regimes are in some way converging as they both combine local/regional forms of steering and combine hierarchy and network forms of steering. In England, the trajectory of the system towards more centralization implies more hierarchy and mandatory instruments in education than in the French case. In none of the countries examined here however, there seem to be a clear and general movement towards an explicit opening of the governance model of schools to new possible sources of socialization typical of the globalization age.

**Sigal Ben Rafael Galanty, 2010-2011 IPSA AISP International Political Science Association: Political Socialization RC 21 'Judicial Review in Japan: "A Limited Mechanism or an Agent of Democratization":**<sup>55</sup> In this paper, the author focuses on Democratic Japan (from 1945 onwards) and the adaptation to the mechanism of

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<sup>54</sup>Olivier, Giraud. (2010). 'New Forms of Subjectivation and Political Socialization Facing New Contents and Forms of Governance in Education Systems, Politics, CCDS, Culture and Socialization, vol. 1 (n° 1), pp. 49-58

URL: <https://archivesic.ccsd.cnrs.fr/CMB/hal-00742965v1>. [Accessed 20/5/2017]

<sup>55</sup>Sigal Ben, and R.G, 'Judicial Review in Japan: A Limited Mechanism or an Agent of Democratization, International Political Science Association Research Committee on Political Socialization and Education (IPSA/RCPSE) RC21, December, 2009

judicial review by its people. Through this case, we hope to shed light on the existence of the non-western democratization model. Furthermore, there is an attempt to argue that the development of a civic culture following the uptake of democratic structures is possible - and can even happen when these structures are limited. Overall, the attitudes towards judicial review may bring us to the conclusion that adopting democratic organs can encourage a dynamic of democratization of the political behaviour and most of all – they may serve as an engine for the internalization of a civic culture. Hence, the author shows that even though they may be restricted but the adoption of democratic mechanisms in Japan has been a catalyst for developing a civil culture, which is still prevalent in present times. It supports those theories considering Japan as a liberal democracy and confirms the non-Western democratization model.

**Simone Abendschön “The Beginnings of Democratic Citizenship: Value Orientations of Young Children”:**<sup>56</sup> The author observes that democracy rests upon the political involvement of its citizens. Within the last couple of years, there has been increasing demands for the inclusion of children – the youngest citizens – in this democratic decision-making process. Since values, from a young age, presumably play a central role in the process of democratic development, this paper focuses on the value orientations of children: Can we detect a consistent structure of value orientations at a young age or are these notions characterized by arbitrariness? The analyses of attitudes of children, ages six to seven-year-old, concerning socially desirable behaviour could show that at the beginning of their school career, young children already do indeed hold clearly structured value orientations. This structure

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<sup>56</sup>Abendschön, Simone. (2006). *The Beginnings of Democratic Citizenship: Value Orientations of Young Children*, 20th World Congress of the International Political Science Association in Fukuoka.



does undergo changes within the socialization context of school. With regard to the children's level of value endowment, it has been found that the socialization context of school had an overall positive effect on the evolution of the level of children's value orientations. Nevertheless, achievement differences between subgroups at the beginning of the first school year have been discovered which could not be compensated for by school influences.

**Stephanie Tawa Lama Rewal: “Studding Elections in India: Scientific and Political Debate”:**<sup>57</sup> The authors in this article have critically studied the election studies in India. They have argued that most of the studies are not conducted in a scientific manner rather these studies have opened up areas for political debate. They strive at a conclusion that in spite of having drawback in scientific methodology of election studies and survey, there is a relationship with the mass media due to absence of rigorous studies. The role of mass media, print and audio-visual shaping, publishing or broadcasting election studies has become critical.

## **1.6 Methodology**

The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative research; exploratory in nature and consists of various quantitative tools. This is based on primary and secondary data sources. Primary data gathered through a field survey from the respondents who were selected through multistage stratified random sampling. For collecting primary data, questionnaire method was applied in field survey. Other techniques include personal interview of various stakeholders. Data has been analysed through SPSS (Statistical

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<sup>57</sup>Tawa Lama-Rewal, S. (2009). Studying Elections in India: Scientific and Political Debates. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, [online] (3). Availableat: (<http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/elections%20inIndia.pdf>) [Accessed 10 Sep. 2017].

Package for Social Science) software package. To prepare the bibliography and references APA (American Psychological Association) style has been used. The secondary data includes books, magazines, articles, Government reports (e.g., Census report, Election commission report), newspapers, television etc.

### **Field Survey and Interview Schedule**

The primary data collected through questionnaire method in the field survey. The survey was conducted in a selected universe for a particular section of respondents who have been selected through stratified random sampling. The survey was based on structured questionnaire in which answers were recorded by the interviewer himself. The study was conducted under the supervision of the researcher (i.e. myself) with the help of some outreach surveyor (ORS). These surveyors were appropriately briefed how to approach a respondent to get quality response to each of the questions to reach out the proposed objectives.

The content of the schedule was structured in both Assamese and English languages to make the respondents comfortable to respond to each of the questions. The answer was put into the schedule by using the coding use for both open and closed ended question. Each of the answer for question carries options and numeric coding system was used in numeric (e.g. 1, 2,3,4,5, etc.), for each options for better and appropriate qualitative analyses of the findings. The participation in the interview was voluntary and the interview was recorded with the permission of the particular respondent.

### **Sampling**

There were 34 Districts in Assam before 2016 Assembly Election. Jorhat district had been purposively selected for the field survey. Two assembly constituencies namely

Mariani and Teok LAC were selected from amongst five Legislative Assembly Constituencies (LAC) of the district. From each of the LAC 4 polling stations were chosen with the help of Stratified Random Sampling (SRS) to give representation of samples. During the survey taking average of 74 respondents from each of the selected polling station a total number of 599 samples were collected. The following polling stations were selected through purposive random sampling-

**Name of the Polling Station and total voters**

<b>SL No</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Name of Polling Station</b>	<b>Total Voters</b>
1	MARIANI	18 No. KATONIBARI L.P SCHOOL (left)	976
		47 No. DHOPATBARI BAGICHA L.P SCHOOL	784
		85 NO. NAKACHARI HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL (left)	1188
		SELENGHAT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL	859
2	TEOK	58 No. JAGADUWAR CHAPORI L.P SCHOOL	775
		15 No. DHEKIYAKHUWA L.P SCHOOL	912
		41 No. LAHUWAL L.P SCHOOL	715
		CHENI AMGURI L.P SCHOOL	904

Source: <http://ceoassam.nic.in/electoralroll.html>

## 1.7 Justification for Selecting Universe

Jorhat is and has been a vibrant place and is a perfect mixture of tradition and modernity. It was the hub of anti-British struggle of Assam. Before that, it was the last capital of the Ahoms, the dynasty that ruled over Assam for six centuries. The cultural environment, which prevails in Jorhat is the result of untiring effort of people trying to preserve its culture.

In the year 1915, Jorhat Sahitya Shabha was established in Jorhat followed by Asam Sahitya Sabha established on 27 December 1917 in Sivasagar. The Chandrakanta Handique Bhavan, donated by late Radhakanta Handique, is the Headquarters of the Asam Sahitya Sabha in Jorhat. Jorhat has been able to produce many creative writers, historians, politicians and journalists. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, the first Assamese to win India's highest literary award, the Jnanpith Award, was from Jorhat. Jorhat is the home of internationally reputed ideologists and educationalists like Krishna Kanta Handique, founder Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University. In the building of modern Assam, Jorhat has played a vital role as a sizable section of Assamese intelligentsia has always been from Jorhat.<sup>58</sup>

Jorhat has been playing a significant role in the politics of Assam during pre and post-independence period. The district had played a very significant role in the freedom movement of the country. After the first General Election in India congress party mostly dominated the district. It was considered as a hub of Upper Assam politics. The people of Jorhat district have always been active in electoral politics and showed a positive voting trend in the district compared to other areas of Assam.

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<sup>58</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

Jorhat district has a composite demography of various groups of people with different social characteristics. District has second highest literacy rate in Assam both in terms of Male and Female. Large numbers of ST, SC, and OBC people dominate the political battlefield in the district. At the same time, a huge numbers of Adivasi communities specially the teagarden workers who have been playing an important role in the politics of the district. Moreover, upper caste Hindus like Brahmins, Kayasthas and other general caste people also play crucial role in the political decision-making. Besides, Jorhat has a significant number of Muslim population established from the days of Ahom Kingdom contributing to the growth of greater Assamese society popularly known as *Asomiya Musolman*.

It is also important to observe that in view of rapid growth of population except few districts of Assam, the dominance of indigenous people in political decision-making has been declining due to immigration and many other socio-economic and political factors. Jorhat is one of such districts where one could visualise Assam from a consistent and conscious socio political discourse from among the indigenous communities.

With these concepts in place Jorhat has been selected as the study area of the present research with a clear target that the empirical findings that come out of the field investigation would be able to answer many questions of electoral politics and participation in district in particular and the state of Assam in general.

The Legislative Constituencies selected for field survey are also characterised by some special features as detailed below:

### **Mariani**

Mariani has a cosmopolitan culture with many communities speaking different

languages and living in harmony for decades. Moreover the constituency share remarkable length interstate boarder with Nagaland where there been long standing boarder deputes.<sup>59</sup>

It is very interesting to observe that the election results of Mariani Constituency show a unique trend. Since its inception except on one occasion the Congress Party won all the elections. It reveals the truth that the traditional vote bank concept is very much present in the constituency though it has been gradually decline in terms of congress party's vote share.<sup>60</sup> This has given a special character to the electoral politics of the constituency compared to others.

### **Teok**

The Teok Legislative Assembly Constituency is one of the original constituencies in Jorhat District. Electoral politics of the constituency shows a very mixed trend. Although in majority of elections Congress Party were dominant followed by regional party AGP but there was the presence of CPI and Janata party also. Once it was a potential area for left politics. Still there are a remarkable number of supporters of left ideology without strong leadership.<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, Teok has a diverse demographic composition ranging from Upper caste Brahmins, Kayasthas to OBC, MOBC, Tea garden workers, Gorias, Morias, STs and SCs. In spite of all these ethnological diversities almost all the people cutting across all caste, communities and religion, socio-political and ideological differences join their hands to celebrate the festivals like birth and death anniversaries of Srimanta Sankar Dev and Sri Sri Madhav Dev, Bihu and Puja etc. which gives an

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<sup>59</sup>Census of India 2011, District Census handbook Jorhat Village and town Directory, Directorate of Census Operation Assam, 2011, pg-48

<sup>60</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/archiveofge2016/09-CONSTITUENCY%20DATA%20-%20SUMMARY.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/archiveofge2016/09-CONSTITUENCY%20DATA%20-%20SUMMARY.pdf) [Accessed 20/10/2017]

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. p. 18

interesting socio-political situation in the constituency. Under these circumstances Teok has been adopted for field study.

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

Election is an agency for democratization of society and politics. It brings politics within the sphere of the common person leading him or her into the political arena. Elections play a significant role in mobilizing millions of people into the political process, crystallizing public opinion on a host of issues, institutional functioning and styles of leadership and in the emergence and recruitment of new political elite.<sup>62</sup>

Elections have influenced the ways in which the priorities of the political parties and the broad parameters of the incumbent government were laid down.<sup>63</sup> Elections have assumed further significance as hundreds of millions of voters, living under conditions of illiteracy, poverty, backwardness, pre-modern social relations, religious distinctions and inequalities based on caste built over hundreds of years were repeatedly called upon to exercise their political right to choose their representatives at the Central, State and local levels.<sup>64</sup>

A research work should produce something new or add something to the existing knowledge based on facts and specialized skill to present the fact in such a way that it leads to the solution of a problem which society confronts.<sup>65</sup> This study is significant

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<sup>62</sup>Nael J, Václav, S. and Matthew, L. (2013). Media and Democratisation: What is Known about the Role of Mass Media in Transitions to Democracy, Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism, New York: Oxford University Press. URL: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/201711/Media%20and%20Democratisation.pdf> [Accessed 20/10/2017]

<sup>63</sup>Suri, K.C, 2002. Democratic Process and Electoral Politics in Andhra Pradesh, India, London: Overseas Development Institute (URL: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/2690.pdf> [Accessed on 20/0/2017]

<sup>64</sup>Ibid. p.19

<sup>65</sup><https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e22e/4b8c05b6dca7996e4ab96ccb21dbf2306972.pdf>. [Accessed on 20/10/2017]

because politics and political participation especially in election have a historical as well as present importance to whole of the society. Above all, the social castes, community, economic class, leadership, mobilization of politics, election campaign and issue-based politics in modern times are crucial for the people's participation in the electoral politics.

This research work is based on electoral politics and political participation of Jorhat district from socio-economic perspective with the theoretical implication of electoral participation. It is an account of the democratic process and electoral politics as well as political participation in Assam particularly in the Jorhat district during the post-independence period. An attempt is made to analyse the ways in which the regional, factional, class and caste factors have been working in state politics and shaped the electoral outcomes. It is important to understand the implications of socio-economic factors on participation of people for greater political activity in the society to elect or select their ruler and government to uphold a greater democratic framework in the state.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

Though it is significant to have a study about Electoral Politics and Political Participation in a democratic country like India to understand the growth of democracy in terms of its core values yet it has some limitations.<sup>66</sup> Many scholars and social scientists were afraid that electoral democracy in India would fail because of its limitations to accommodate the democratic institutions like elections and its

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid. p.19



conducting machinery.<sup>67</sup> However, the democratic procedure introduced by laws not only sustained but also took its own direction. Elections held at regular intervals as per the established laws and procedures have strengthened the entire democratic system that evolved in the country.<sup>68</sup>

Indian electoral democracy has always been controlled and shaped by its diverse socio-economic conditions which kept on changing with time. While studying electoral politics these conditions always come on the way. The scholars who study any area about electoral democracy are bound by these changing conditions. To draw an absolute conclusion or make a long lasting prediction on the trends of electoral politics and political participation becomes nearly impossibility. The present research is also not an exception to that.

The study is about the electoral politics and political participation of Assam, but it is not possible to collect the accurate information about demographic profile covering population of all social groups and economic classes from whole of the state. There is no adequate writing on Assam's electoral politics and political participation. It is difficult to portray this work under foreign theories in the area, which have been developed in different socio-cultural economic settings and backgrounds. As the area of electoral politics and participation in Assam is almost untouched by academic writings, one has to take primary sources data to fill the gap.

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<sup>67</sup>Kohli, Atul. (2001). *The Success of India's Democracy*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid. p.20

## **1.10 Electoral Politics and Political Participation: A Theoretical Framework**

Election is a key element of democracy and mass voting by the people is usually associated with the concept of participatory democracy. Elections are the major agents of political socialization where different issues are raised and in this way, elections serve as an instrument of political communication in the society.<sup>69</sup> Elections have adopted the principle of universal adult franchise and democratic rule after long-time evolution. Elections are central to the functioning of modern democracy.

Democracy today implies not Government by the people, which is an impossibility but effective control over Government by the people. Elections constitute the principal mechanism for exercising this control and it is this that gives special significance to them. Elections determine who should come into power and carry on the Government of the country. They are held periodically and those who come to power as a result of one general election hold office only till the next general election. It is through this power of electoral decision that people exercise control over Government and the broad lines of policy pursued by it. Elections give legitimacy or a valid title to rule to Government in a democracy.

In a monarchy of the traditional type, blood-descent gives this title. In dictatorships, it is the command over the army on which this title is based though in several of them this is combined with control over a single political party, which alone is permitted to exist under the law of the land. Even in dictatorships, election may be held, but they are a mere formality. There is no real choice for the people as there are no competing candidates standing for election. It is only in a democracy that elections have a

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<sup>69</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/169469/6/06\\_preface.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/169469/6/06_preface.pdf) (Accessed 20/10/2017)

meaning. Elections are the particularly conspicuous and revealing aspects of the most contemporary political system, as they serve to highlight and dramatize a political system bringing its nature into sharp relief and provide insights into the other aspects of the system.

Therefore, during an election, a political system is on display even though the features that are most obviously on display may be only a small part of "the iceberg that lies beneath." Elections are complex events involving individual and collective decisions, which directly affects and affected by the total political and social process. They open up channels between the polity and the society, between the elites and the masses, between the individual and his government. They are major agencies of political socialization and political participation.<sup>70</sup>

As V.C. Key Jr. has noted "an election itself is a formal act of collective decision that occurs in a stream of connected antecedent and subsequent behaviour; it is not a single event but a concatenation of thousands of events, some of great significance, some more trivial."<sup>71</sup>

The electoral system must be viewed as a part of the large political system, and this in turn of the even more comprehensive and more important social system. The electoral process is one of societal goal legitimatization and accommodation of interests.<sup>72</sup>

Elections also serve the basic purpose not only of the continuance and of legitimacy of the old (existing) regime but also of an instrument of change and of a redistribution of political power.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Norman D. P. (1975). *Elections and Political Development*. New Delhi:Vikas Publishing House, p.78

<sup>71</sup>V. O, K, Jr. (1955). A Theory of Critical Election, *Journal of Politics*, XVII, February, p. 3. (<http://faculty.smu.edu/jmwilson/Key1.pdf>) [Accessed 23/12/2017]

<sup>72</sup>Ibid. p. 4

<sup>73</sup>David, E. A. (1977). *Introduction to Political Analysis*. England: Scott Foresman & Co. p. 166

Through election, democracies can achieve that peaceful change of administration, which is the most difficult of problems for dictatorship. Thus, elections constitute essential and one of the most important aspects for the democratic process. The entire electoral process in a democracy (and even in authoritarian states) is a long affair, although it differs in its details from state to state.<sup>74</sup> Elections, which are widely regarded as a means of taking or giving power, are of different types.

They are:<sup>75</sup>

(a) General Elections (b) By-Elections (c) Mid-Term Elections (d) Plebiscite (e) Referendum (f) Initiative (g) Polls or Surveys

The most commonly accepted or discussed of elections are the General Elections. The periodicities of the general elections are more or less fixed. They may take place every 3 years or every 5 years. In India, the Lok Sabha and Assembly Elections held in every 5 years. They have regarded and valued as major and decisive political events in our country, so far the general elections in this country held in 1951-52, 1956-57, 1961-62, 1966-67, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2014.<sup>76</sup> In Britain and the United States too General Elections are similarly viewed as crucial and decisive political events.

The second type of election is the By-election. A by-election is a more or less an isolated or limited phenomenon. By-elections are held as supplementary, supporting or corrective elections. They may be held when a seat in the parliament or state legislature falls vacant upon a member's resignation, dismissal, death or invalidation of his election.

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<sup>74</sup>Sharma Paramatma, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>75</sup>Swatantra Newsletter Oct. 5. 1959. (URL: [www.Indiapolicy.org](http://www.Indiapolicy.org)) [Accessed 20/10/2017]

<sup>76</sup>Ibid. p. 87

The third variety of election is the Mid-term elections. It is a kind of election, which occurs in the middle of the term and does not coincide with the point at which a particular term of office in question ends. The Mid-term may signify a point in time, which may come earlier or later than the stage of the scheduled elections. In 1971, the mid-term elections were held in India. Another set of elections are — plebiscite, referendum and initiative. These three devices are common in Canada, the United States and Switzerland (especially the last country). A plebiscite implies a state-sponsored or state-held election to ascertain popular opinion on a particular situation, problem or issue. The referendum is also a state-sponsored measure to seek or elicit popular opinion on a particular problem or issue.<sup>77</sup>

They have emerged in modern times in a number of groups or agencies, which conducts periodical surveys to ascertain people's votes, opinions, choices, preferences, etc., on various issues. The Indian Institute of Public Opinion, which is located at New Delhi, India, conducts periodical public opinion surveys on wide-ranging issues, beginning from Prime Minister's popularity to food habits and preferences of people.

#### Various Perspectives on Election

Elections are generally regarded as belonging to the field of politics they also figure importantly in non-political spheres, such as:

(1) Social (2) Economic (3) Industrial (4) Educational (5) Religious (6) Cultural (7) Literary

There are a number of representatives organizational, administrative, coordinative and executive or other types of bodies in these various non-political spheres variously

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid. p. 40

known by names as Association, Organization, Congress, Circle, Club, Bureau, Chamber, Group, Alliance, Concord, Federation, Sangh, Parishad, Sabha, Mandal, Anjuman, Committee, Society etc.

#### Various Levels of Elections

In the descending order, the levels can be listed as follows:

**Table: 1.1 Elections at Different Levels**

1.	International	League of Nations, United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, etc.
2.	National	Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, House of Commons, Senate etc.
3.	State	Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council.
4.	District	Zilla Parishad, District Development Council.
5.	Taluka	Taluka Development Board, Agricultural Produce Market Committee
6.	Village	Gram Panchayat, Village Council.

Source: R.T. Jangam, Political Sociology<sup>78</sup>

#### Various Stages and Phases of Elections

There are a number of stages and phases which maybe said to characterize the processes of various elections.<sup>79</sup> We can divide them into the following stages and phases:

- 1) Determination of Constituency
- 2) Nomination or adoption of candidature;
- 3) Canvassing;
- 4) Polling or voting;
- 5) Election Malpractices;

<sup>78</sup>Jangam, R.T. (1980). *Textbook of Political Sociology*. UK: Oxford & IBH Publishing House. p. 40

<sup>79</sup>Ghai, U.R. (1995). *Comparative Politics and Government*. Jalandhar: New Academic Publishing Co, p.189

- 6) Result computation and result declaration;
- 7) Predictability: prediction of election results and voting behaviour

### **1.11 Theories of Electoral Politics**

Electoral politics are the most visible and symbolic form of political participation. Periodic, genuine, free and fair elections are essential for the achievement of effective democracy. The free, fair and transparent elections reflect the will of the people, which provide the basis of the authority of the government. Henry J. Steiner in his work, states, “Countries with markedly different political systems have termed political participation the vital human right. In its absence, it is said; all others fall to an existence.”<sup>80</sup>

Elections are, therefore, the means by which the great mass of citizens can participate directly in the political process. Electoral Politics has a participatory play in the governing process through elections in which both voters and politicians want to achieve power, ‘to control the behaviour of others through force, threats, or withholding of resources’.<sup>81</sup> Study of electoral politics renders an understanding of how government’s policies, political parties’ strategies about elections operate and how people behave accordingly. This study involves the investigation of citizens interacting with each other. Electoral politics is concerned with the distribution of advantages and disadvantages among people based on their interests. Citizens are constantly interacting with each other, and since the satisfaction of many of a person’s needs depends upon the relationships he establishes with others, the preferences and

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<sup>80</sup>Henry, J. Steiner. (1960). *Political Participation as Human Rights*. New York: McMillan and Company Ltd. p.60.

<sup>81</sup>Robertson, (1987). *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books. p.88.

interests of some individuals will inevitably come into opposition with the preferences and interests of others.

This opposition of preferences and interests may result in competition or conflict and in attempts by those concerned to reach some sort of accommodation, varying from elimination of the competitor to a reconciliation of differences. Based on electoral politics, elected politicians gain office from the votes of a certain number of people, geographically defined i.e. from their constituencies. They owe their election to the votes, campaign funds, party work, and efforts of those who elected them as their elected representatives. They enjoy their work and desire to remain in office. The stronger the support, the greater will be the obligation by the politician to the supporters<sup>82</sup> and all this has acquired place in the Electoral Politics.

Factors such as socio-economic status, religion, family influence, and the state of the national, local and provincial affairs affect political attitudes; but the people's conscious feelings about the parties, issues and candidates are the immediate determinants of voting behaviour.<sup>83</sup>

Throughout one's life, a variety of agents exert influence on their political outlook. A considerable portion of this learning occurs before the individual is old enough to enter the voting booth i.e. in the early days of life. Family background can determine voting and party preferences.<sup>84</sup> Many if not most, individuals adopt the same party identification as their parents. It was assumed that parents transmitted their

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid. pp. 6-8

<sup>83</sup>Robert, S. E, Norman R. L and Kent L.T. (1980). *American Public Opinion*. Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, p.301.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid, p.25



partisanship to their offspring through a process called political socialization.<sup>85</sup>

Inheritance of party loyalty is a matter of consideration in the present research.

Participation of the people in the electoral process is the substance of procedural democracy and during every election; large numbers of people participate in procedural democracy. Elections are the hallmark of democracy. Robert Dahl, in an introduction to democratic theory suggests that political parties and elections are two requisite institutions of any democracy.<sup>86</sup> Electoral politics and political process both have direct relation with each other. Electoral process establishes political institutions whose success and failure depends upon the rate of political awareness. Democratic elections are a fair competitive examination for recruitment of leaders by the electorates.<sup>87</sup>

Electoral systems determine the rules according to which the voters may express their political preferences and according to which it is possible to convert votes into parliamentary seats<sup>88</sup>. In electoral politics, people are mostly concerned with issues about war and peace, prosperity and depression, corruption and “good” governance. In election campaigns politicians are interested in getting re-elected.<sup>89</sup> During election, process and campaigns politicians use the language of voter, they liberally use “should” and “ought to”, they deal in generalities and half-truths, they say things, which they probably don’t mean and don’t understand themselves. In Electoral Politics, politicians have different strategies and techniques. The strategy of the

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid, p.26

<sup>86</sup>Robert, A. Dahl. (1956). *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.158.

<sup>87</sup>Muhammad, T. J. (2000). *The Mixed Proportional Electoral System for Pakistan*. Islamabad: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. p.1.

<sup>88</sup>Dietor, N. (1966). *Elections and Electoral Systems Bonn*. New York: Friedrich Ebert-Stifting. p.84.

<sup>89</sup>J, Blondel. (1974). *Voters, Parties, and Leaders: The Social Fabric of British Politics*. Australia: Penguin Books. pp. 27-28.

politicians is clear. They make broad, vague, ambiguous, and emotional appeals in the hopes of winning as many votes as possible. This strategy serves a function for both politicians and people: for politicians it is generally the only strategy that will result in success to people it gives the kinds of things they want to hear. Campaigns help to assure voters that they are making the right choice.<sup>90</sup> This research endeavours to see the impact of such big promises and slogans made by the politicians and political parties on electoral politics.

One of the major components of electoral politics is voting. The act of voting gives a concrete example of the individual citizen responding to stimuli, making decisions, and finally either acting or choosing not to. It provides a useful and illuminating case study of political behaviour.<sup>91</sup> In electoral politics, a high voting turnout among the citizens is considered to be a significant indicator of the health of the political system, because political participation is assumed to be essential to the proper functioning of the democracy. Most political studies also assume that the act of voting is an indication that the individual citizen views himself as an active participant in the political system.

If the individual feels, based on experience, that the results of elections do influence the decision of the government and that the efforts of individuals like him can affect the results of elections then he will be motivated to participate in the electoral process. If the citizen is motivated, he may put more of his time, energy, and resources into the process by studying the issues involved in the election, contributing to campaigns or actively working to help create support for a candidate, party, or position on some

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<sup>90</sup>J. Blondel, Op.Cit.,

<sup>91</sup>Rush, M. and Althoff. (1971). *An Introduction to Political Sociology*. UK: Neson& son. p.14.

issue. If his effort is not rewarded by some sense of accomplishment, he is likely to make less of an investment in future elections.<sup>92</sup>

The basic logic of voting as mentioned in **Down's**<sup>93</sup> work is '**rational choice**', i.e. voters, vote as per their self-interests and parties or candidates who receive votes are also rational because they have their own interests. These interests are not clear but always uncertain. This situation of uncertainty always becomes the backbone of electoral politics. Politicians act solely in order to attain the income, prestige and power which come from being in office. According to rational choice theory, politicians never seek office as a means of carrying out particular policies; their only goal is to reap the rewards of holding office.<sup>94</sup> They treat policies purely as means to the attainment of their private ends, which they can reach only by being elected. Parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies. In the present study, an attempt has been made to understand the trend of electoral politics and political participation in the State of Assam in the light of the Rational Choice theory.

To understand how elections are won and lost, one must consider not only the influence that social characteristics have on the individual voter, but also the roles played by such institutional arrangements as election laws, these also affect how many seats each party wins in its national parliament.

### **Electoral Process**

The electoral process is a means of decision that lies within a broader political order and in research on voting it is valuable to have the wider political system in which the

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<sup>92</sup>Ross, J.F.S. (1955). *Elections and Electors*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode. p.33.

<sup>93</sup>Anthony, Downs. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Brother Publishers. p. 28.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid. p. 30

electoral process is found. Timely elections would seem to be obviously related to political developments. They have to be considered in the context of the political culture and sentiments about legitimacy and commitment to the system; they have a direct and often decisive bearing on the capacity of a political system and on the performance of the authoritative structures of government in many political systems. They have a central role in the non-authoritative structures and the general political process. Elections induce the important element of accountability into a political system, and provide a means by which such accountability is achieved in greater or lesser degree. As John Badgley has reasoned, "A civil polity is one in which the public interest is served by the process of accountability."<sup>95</sup> While on the other hand Samuel Huntington believes that in many countries, elections serve only to enhance the power of disruptive and often reactionary social forces, except on short run basis.<sup>96</sup>

Elections and political parties have a direct relationship with each other. During elections, parties are most prominently on display, or, to put it in another way, on trial. An election provides an unrivalled opportunity to examine the organization, the personnel, and the policies of the parties. Parties are the main agencies for organizing and for providing political direction to the electorate, and for political choice. The electoral system affects the political life of a country mainly through the parties.<sup>97</sup>

Elections are a mechanism, which parties use to maintain their support base.

Elections help to establish links between the society, mainly non-political and the political system in which parties function and of which they are apart. In

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<sup>95</sup> John, Badgley. (1971). *Asian Development: Problems and Prognosis*. New York: The Free Press. p.139.

<sup>96</sup>Samual, P. H. (1988). "Made about Mega", *Newsweek*. New York. p.12.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid, p.33

heterogeneous society, people who are psychologically and emotionally attached to their political groups have two perspectives i.e., traditionalist perspective and revisionist perspective.<sup>98</sup> According to the traditionalist perspective, party identification is primarily an emotional attachment and not the result of the individual's consideration of which party might be more likely to better serve his or her interests.<sup>99</sup>

Thus, a citizen refrains from changing his party loyalty he has acquired so early in life without paying any heed to the multiple issues and policies surrounding him.<sup>100</sup>

According to the Revisionist perspective, model partisanship is not merely a psychological attachment without political meaning; rather it reflects the citizen's judgment of the parties' performance on issues important to the citizen.<sup>101</sup> With all the information regarding political parties, campaign, candidates and contemporary issues at his disposal, it seems quite reasonable to state that issues and policy matters play an important role in determining an individual's partisanship.<sup>102</sup>

Electoral politics is concerned with all these issues and is based on wide range of factors such as political system, political parties, interest groups, military and bureaucracy. In electoral politics historical, social, psychological and other ecological factors directly effect on electoral process. Electoral Politics is also conditioned by deep-seated historical and societal factors.<sup>103</sup> Gopal Krishna has observed that the decision to vote for one candidate rather than another may be governed entirely by non-political considerations and the voter may often be unaware of the political

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid, p.45

<sup>99</sup>Robert S. Erikson, N. R, Luttbeg and Kent L. Tedin. (1980). *American Public Opinion*. New York: Oxford University Press. p.301

<sup>100</sup>Ibid, p.301

<sup>101</sup>Ibid, p.305

<sup>102</sup>Ibid, p.310

<sup>103</sup>Ibid, p.280

choice he/she is making through the act of voting.<sup>104</sup> The importance of considering the electoral process within the societal as well as the political framework, and the role of elections as providing a crucial link between the society and the polity calls attention to the relationship between the political and the social system.<sup>105</sup>

## 1.12 Theories of Political Participation

Political participation means the involvement of groups and individuals at various levels in the political system. Political participation is a process by which people participate in the political process. It refers to all those voluntary involvements of individuals or groups at various levels of political process. In the opinion of Harbert Mc Closky,<sup>106</sup> it is the voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy. Conway defines it as "activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of government authorities, or the politics of government. Huntington defines it as those activities by private citizen designed to influence government decision-making. Nie and Verba<sup>107</sup> believe that political participation includes those legal activities by private citizen, which are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selections of governmental personnel and the action they take.

Thus, it seems that the view of political participation varies. The term 'political participation' has been used in two senses *narrow* and *broad*. In the narrow sense, it includes the activities like discussion of politics, convincing other person to vote in a

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid, p.290

<sup>105</sup>Samuel J. E. and Bashiruddin, A. (1978). *Citizens and Politics: Mass Political Behaviour in India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.89.

<sup>106</sup>Mc Closky H. *Op. Cit.*,

<sup>107</sup>Nie, Verba and Kim. (1971). *Modes of democratic Participation: Cross National Comparison*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publication. p. 9

particular way, contributing money to campaign and other activities of this nature. In the broad sense, it includes all behaviour through which people directly express their opinion.

### **Origin of Political Participation**

The term 'political participation' can be traced back from the ancient Greek period. In Greek city-states, political participation embodied the citizen's life in the 'polls'. Greeks believed that citizenship means capacity to rule and to be ruled.<sup>108</sup> It was also mentioned in the medieval period in the writings of Marshilio of Padua (14th century). He wanted to liberate the temporal authority from the domination of church. In the middle ages, the community regarded Ecclesiastical property as a grant or subsidy. Even the doctrine of representation has its root in the medieval period.<sup>109</sup> A representative was a trustee rather than agent of the people. However, Marshillio of Padua advocated the idea of representation and popular sovereignty in the modern sense, in the early modern period the English scholar, John Locke nurtured the concept.<sup>110</sup> He clearly advocated on the rights of the people acting for cause not only to replace the government but also to change the form of government by itself. By the people he does not mean the Parliament only but the general community considered as a separate legal entity. Rousseau, in his concept of General Will gave a final change to popular participation in the governmental affairs.<sup>111</sup>

According to Rousseau, the sovereign people assembled to institute the government and voted firstly so that a certain form of government can be instituted. They then voted so that certain individuals shall be appointed to the offices thus created.

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<sup>108</sup> Sun, Surinder. (1962). *Elections: A Political Analysis*. New Delhi: Sudha Publication. pp. 31-40

<sup>109</sup> Zolberg, A.R. (1981). *Origins of the Modern World System: A Missing Link World Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 125-130

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p.230

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. P.245

Rousseau distinguishes the two acts by stating that the first vote expresses the General Will and is the law. While the second vote merely represents a government.<sup>112</sup> However, it is true that in the earlier period, the term 'political participation' had a narrow meaning, which dealt with the people's participation in election process through voting, mobilizing, canvassing, attending meetings and political discussions. Now, it comprehends all those activities, by which subjects influence governmental process. (It may be in the form of protest).

Participation means the involvement of groups and individuals at various levels in the political system. Political participation is a process by which people participate in the political process. It refers to all those voluntary involvements of individuals or groups at various levels of political process. Political participation means participation of the people in the decision making process, policy formulation, Election and in fact, in the whole process of struggle for power in society.<sup>113</sup>

Elmo Roper<sup>114</sup> holds that the following five activities form part of political participation.

These are:

- Voting at the polls
- Supporting possible pressure group by being members of them
- Personally Communicating directly with legislators
- Participating in political party activities and thus acquiring claim over legislators,

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<sup>112</sup>Mc Closky H. (1968). *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* Vol. 2 Edition 2. London: Macmillan Reference USA. p.252

<sup>113</sup>Ibid. p.255

<sup>114</sup>Elmo, R. (1955). *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*. UK: Routledge Publication. p. 202



- Engaging in habitual dissemination of political opinions through word of mouth, communication to other citizens

The understanding of political participation has undergone sea change over the years. The modern empirical study of political participation began developing in tandem with the modern study of electoral behaviour using sample survey data. Much empirical work was done in U.S and much of that was connected to the Michigan Survey Research Centre, especially under leadership of Warren Miller and Philip Converse.<sup>115</sup> These investigators collaborated with colleagues outside U.S especially in Europe, producing further studies addressing participation.

### **Types of Participation**

Lester. W. Milbrath<sup>116</sup> on the other hand, ranks political activities in a hierarchical order as:

- (a) Gladiatorial activities, which include holding public and party office candidate of office, investing time in election canvassing, becoming an active member of a party.
- (b) Transitional activities include attending of political meetings, monetary contribution to political party contacting political leaders and the like.
- (c) Spectator activities that include voting, putting stickers on cars, etc.

According to **Mishra**, participation involves three kinds of dimensions as:<sup>117</sup>

- (a) The kind of participation, which includes participation in decision making, monitoring and evaluation,

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<sup>115</sup>Verba, S. and Nie, N. (1987). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.17

<sup>116</sup>Milbrath stratified the electorates into “gladiators” (the small number of party actives and officeholders), “spectators” (who seek information and vote) and “apathetics” (who participate only passively, if at all), Cited from McClosky Herbert in ‘Political Participation’, Sills David L. Ed. (1998). *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. London: Macmillan Publishers. p254

<sup>117</sup>Giri, V. and Gokilvani, S. (1997). *Reaching the unreachable women's participation in panchayat raj administration*. Karaikudi: Department of Women's Studies, Alagappa University. p. 140

(b) Who will participate in election, it could be the rural poor, local leaders, foreign residents,

(c) How participation will occur voluntary or coercive which includes the aspects such as whether the initiative for participation is from above or below.

This framework implies that participation occurs when the person who participates is fully aware of his responsibilities.

The Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) has identified the following kinds of activities, which form the part of political participation:<sup>118</sup>

- Voting
- Canvassing for candidates
- Getting out voters,
- Organization of meetings and rallies
- Participation in processions
- Participation in processions
- Distribution of pamphlets and campaign literature,
- Other campaign activities,
- Campaign through associations and groups,
- Attending public meetings and rallies
- Membership of political parties
- Conducting party leaders in resolving problems and
- Conducting government officials in solving problems

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<sup>118</sup>Kumar, S. (2014). *Indian Youth and Electoral Politics*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications. pp. 161-165

## **Electoral Participation**

Electoral participation is an essential part of any form of democracy - whether modern or old. It is a political device for ensuring government by discussion and consent. To be democratic, a parliamentary government must be adequately representative of the different interests, classes and groups of society. Election politics is also a major agency of political socialization and increasing political participation.<sup>119</sup> It is the election process, which opens up new channels between the polity and the society, between the power elites and the masses.

As involvement of the people varies from changing levels of participation, the participation also varies from system to system. Participation may be limited in developing societies because of certain factors such as, the level of economic advancement, literacy and general problem of communication. In some other systems, participation in political process is more or less controlled by the rulers.<sup>120</sup>

On the contrary, in modern democracies, participation is usually by various means for seeking cooperation and confidence of the constituent citizens. Moreover, where participation occurs at the same level, its nature and importance, may vary from one system to another. Some system may provide ample choice to the voters, whereas others may restrict it only for the certain occasions.

For e.g. the voter of United States is faced with as many as of 40 choices at one election time. He is called upon to choose a President, a Senator and a member of the House of Representatives (all at Federal level), a Governor, a member of the State Legislature and various officials (all at State levels), and various local government officials (at country and possibly municipal level). The significance of voting may

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<sup>119</sup>K, Vatsyanan. (1992). *Political Sociology*. Meerat: Kedamath Ramnath & Company Ltd. p. 13

<sup>120</sup>Kazenstein, Mary, F. (1980). *Women and Politics in India*. New Delhi: Women and Social Change. P. 15

differ from election to election. For example, national elections may be regarded as more important than state and local level elections.<sup>121</sup> In some societies, elections may have a decisive voice in the overall functioning of the system, whereas in some merely of a ritualistic value. Similarly, in some systems, the voting turnout may be comparatively high. The scholars conducting research in the field of voting behaviour have noticed a close relationship between the demographic factors and the extent range of turnout. Similarly, they have found that the citizens of advanced countries have a greater sense of participation in comparison to the under-developed or the developing ones.

The constitutional and legislative provisions of the concerned system also affect participation. At the initial stage, prohibitions were laid down in the American Constitution on the participation based on race, religion, property or sex. Religion, race, sex, mobility and residence are those variables, which are related with the process of participation.

Almond and Verba found that men were more likely to be members of voluntary organization than women were. Almond and Verba also uphold the view that education is also one of the contributory factors for increasing in the participation.<sup>122</sup> However, in the example of education, it can be seen that three of the most powerful influences are at work, which are influencing participation-articulation, sensitivity to one's self interest and effective socialization, by the political culture.

These are important in differentiation and politically active from the ordinary citizen. Milbrath suggests that political participation varies in relation to four major factors, namely, (a) the extent to which the individual receives political stimulation (e) the

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<sup>121</sup>Verba and Nie. 1971, p. 80

<sup>122</sup>Verba and Nie. 1971 p. 45

individual's personal characteristics; (c) the individual's social characteristics; and (d) the political: setting or environment in which the individual finds himself.<sup>123</sup> The above factors have been found considerably affecting the participation process at the level of gladiatorial activities. Moreover, so far as the democratic systems are concerned, there is general agreement that the decision-makers are not invariably the representative of the general public in real sense.

Hence, in general, it can be said that political participation is influenced by the socio-economic factors, and, particularly, participation at the gladiatorial level in a democratic society is in the hands of those persons who are representing the smallest possible segment of the society. Though there are various classifications available in this respect, yet the classification of Verba and Nie is considered as more sophisticated one.

**Table: 1.2 Strength of Different types of Political Participation**

<b>Types of political participation</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Those who regularly vote	72
Those who always vote	47
Those who are active in at least one community organization	30
Those who have worked with others in finding solution to community problems	30
Those who have attended to persuade others to vote	28
Those who have actively worked for political party	26
Those who have contacted local officials about some problems	20
Those who have attended at least one political party meeting in last 3 years	19
Those who contacted a state or national or national government about some issues or problem	18
Those who formed a group to solve a community problem	14
Those who given money to a party candidate	13
Those who have are presently a member of a political party or organization.	08

Source: Verba & Nie (1971)<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Lester, W. Milbrath. (1995). Political Participation, Chicago: McNally and Company, p.18.

<sup>124</sup>Verba & Nie. 1971, p. 90

### 1.13 Factors Influencing Electoral Participation<sup>125</sup>

Political participation depends on variety of factors some of them are socio-economic (status, education, religion sex etc.); some psychological (differences in drives and capacities) whereas others are influenced by the political environment (political structures and institutions, party system etc.) but all these factors are closely interconnected.

The extent to which citizens participate in politics and the way in which they do are influenced significantly by their social circumstances. These circumstances include how individuals live, where they live, the kind of education they have, their occupation and how much they earn, and the opportunities they have for improving their lives. Social circumstances affect the level of resources available for political participation and serve to foster or inhibit development of attitudes and belief that underlie various types of participation. Indicators of social circumstances include such characteristics as age, race, education, caste, region, place of residence, marital status, etc.

The five-nation study Verba and Nie focuses on the strong relation between education and political activities; especially in region campaigning activity and communal activity.

Life experiences, which are partly determined by social circumstances, also influence a person's political behaviour. Difference in life experiences are not constant over time as life experience changes with changing social and economic conditions the effects on citizen's political views and citizen's mobilization for political activity also change.

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<sup>125</sup>McClosky Herbert in 'Political Participation', Sills David L. Ed. (1998). *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, London: Macmillan Publishers, p. 259

Political participation also influences the psychological orientation of the citizens.

Group consciousness is another important factor that mobilizes the political participation. In fact, class or group consciousness may produce high levels of organizational involvement and political participation. The group or class consciousness of people binds them through some common interest, the serving of which induces them to involve in organization's/organized behaviour and ultimately this mobilized their political participation.<sup>126</sup>

The political environment also plays an important role in motivating or discouraging participation. The electoral system, fund raising techniques, campaigning support of political parties or other organizations may promote and facilitate political participation. In democratic countries, the scope of political participation is greater than in others, in fact the success of democracy depends on the very nature and intensity of political participation is matter of counting dispute, it must be recognise as a key element in the political environment. The expansion of radio television coverage, newspaper and the print media and the overall revolution in information has a significant impact on citizens in perception of government, politicians and the political process.

In most of the contemporary, modern period system, there are section people who despite being given ample scope for political participation remain shy of it. To this we can account that there are many factors apart from the directly political ones that influence political participation. Thus, a host of interacting factors influence the nature and degree of political participation.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Baker, D. G. (1983). *Race Ethnicity and Power: A Comparative Study*. UK: Routledge, p. 11

<sup>127</sup>Conway Margart, (1985). Political Participation in the United States. *Congressional Quarterly* In.p. 69

## **1.14 Plan of the Thesis**

The thesis is presented in the following six chapters:

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

This chapter contains the most important units like research problem, review of the literature, objectives of the study, significance and limitation of the study, methodology, hypothesis and a broad presentation of the chapters to be included into the thesis. A conceptual framework of electoral politics and political participation derived from different social thinkers, research works etc. is also a part of this chapter.

### **Chapter II: Indian Electoral Democracy: An Overview**

The Chapter covers the areas like electoral democracy in India in historical perspective, elections in pre and post independent India, political parties in the initial stage, delimitation of constituencies, election procedure, role of election commission, changing trend of political participation in India, etc. It also contains different types of electoral participation in various democracies of the world. The chapter has units covering the importance elections in democracies and growing importance of electoral studies in India.

### **Chapter III: History of Electoral Politics and Trend of People's Participation in Assam**

The chapter is basically on political history and electoral politics in Assam starting from British annexation of Assam through Yandaboo Treaty in 1826 and its



subsequent colonial rule up to constitution of first legislative assembly in Assam from 1937 to 1947. This chapter also has a discussion on the elections and trends of electoral participation since the first general election held in 1952 held in Assam. This chapter includes a comparative trend of political participation of national and state elections with special reference to Assam.

#### **Chapter IV: Trends of Electoral Politics and Political Participation of the Study Area**

This is comprised of the study related to research area, the district of Jorhat of Assam. Starting with a general account of the district, an analysis of socio-economic composition of population of Jorhat from the historical perspective is presented in this chapter. Since the district had played an important role in India's freedom movement, therefore one independent unit is dedicated in this chapter on the role of Jorhat in India's freedom movement. There is another unit which covers the geography, climatology and demography of the district in this chapter. People of Jorhat district is very much vibrant and sensitive to social situation and political issues which has being analysed in one unit of this chapter. Finally, an attempt is made to critically analyse the trend of electoral politics and political participation of all the assembly constituencies of the district in this chapter.

#### **Chapter V: Findings and Data Analysis**

Analysis of data collected from the field study has been presented with the help of different variables in this chapter. The major findings are being highlighted and the

factors influencing the changing trend of electoral politics and political participation in the district are presented in this chapter.

## **Chapter VI: Conclusion**

In this chapter, depending upon the analysis and objectives of the study some recommendations are made which may be taken into consideration by election conducting machineries to strengthen the democratic institutions of the country. These will also be helpful to political parties to make strategic mobilisation among the voters for more participation in the political process. Some suggestions on the scope of future research on the area have also been made in this chapter.

## CHAPTER II

# INDIAN ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY: AN OVERVIEW

Elections are one of the few methods that enable a society to reach a collective decision based on individual preferences. Elections serve as a mean of linking citizens to government. Voting is the one activity that binds the individual to the political system and legitimizes the democratic process. National elections are widely considered as the central focus of all political activity in established democracies.<sup>128</sup>

Electoral politics in India essentially is a constitutional affair drawing its strength from the Constitutional body popularly known as Election Commission.<sup>129</sup> It is therefore customary to have a brief discussion on the constitutional provisions about the body, polity, election procedures and rights of the voters, etc.

India is the largest democracy in the World.<sup>130</sup> Since 1947, the country is having its regular general elections - both for Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of the States as per the principles of the Constitution, electoral laws and system. The Constitution of India has vested in the Election Commission with powers of the superintendence, direction and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to

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<sup>128</sup>Zoya Hasan, (2002), 'Introduction: Conflict Pluralism and the Competitive Party System in India', in Zoya Hasan (ed), *Parties and Party Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 1.

<sup>129</sup>[www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in) (Accessed 20/10/17)

<sup>130</sup>"*World's Largest Democracy to Reach One Billion Persons on Independence Day*". *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, United Nations: Population Division [Accessed 20/10/2017]

Parliament and Legislature of every State and to the offices of President and Vice-President of India.<sup>131</sup>

The politics of India take place in a framework of a federal parliamentary multi-party representative democratic republic. The Prime Minister of India is identified as the head of government, while the President of India is said to be the formal head of state that holds substantial reserved powers. It places him or her in approximately in the same position as the British monarch. The government enforces executive power. It can be said that federal legislative power is vested in both the two chambers of the Parliament of India. In India judiciary is independent from both the executive and the legislature. The Constitution has proclaimed India as to be a "Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic."<sup>132</sup>

India is the second largest country by population with democratically elected governments. Like the United States, India has a federal form of government; however, the central government enjoys greater power in relation to its States. The central government India is patterned after the British Parliamentary system. Regarding the former, "the Centre", the national government, may dismissed the state governments if no majority party or coalition is able to form a government or under specific Constitutional clauses and can impose direct federal rule known as President's rule.<sup>133</sup> At the local level, there is the Panchayati Raj System, which is conferred with several administrative functions by the constitution.

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<sup>131</sup>W. H. Morris, Jones. (1978). *The Government and Politics of India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 237

<sup>132</sup>Shiva, R. (ed.). (2004). *The Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. V. New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing, p. 835.

<sup>133</sup>Kothari, R. (2005). *Politics in India*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, (reprint), p. 107.

## **2.1 Elections in India**

Election is a device, which creates a sense of involvement and participation in public affairs in modern. It is through popular elections that the authority of government is clothed with legitimacy; by peaceful transfer of authority is to the new leaders. A good electoral system is therefore, the basic principle of genuine representative government.<sup>134</sup> Elections have adopted the principle of universal adult franchise and democratic rule in India.

### **Colonial Legacy of Electoral Politics**

#### **General Election in India, 1920<sup>135</sup>**

General elections were held in British India in 1920 to elect members to the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Councils. They were the first elections in the country's history. The new Central Legislative Assembly which was the lower chamber of the Imperial Legislative Council was based in Delhi had 104 elected seats, of which 66 were contested and eight were reserved for Europeans elected through the Chambers of Commerce. For the upper chamber, the Council of State, 24 of the 34 seats were contested, whilst five were reserved for Muslims, three for Whites, one for Sikhs and one for the United Provinces.

The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn opened the Parliament on 9 February 1921. Alongside the national elections, there were also elections to 637 seats in Provincial Assemblies. Of these, 440 were contested, 188 had a single candidate elected

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<sup>134</sup>Bhalla, R.P. (1973). *Elections in India*, New Delhi: S. Chand Publication. Pp. 423-425

<sup>135</sup>Saroja, S. (1989). *March to freedom in Madras Presidency, 1916–1947*. Madras: Lalitha Publications. pp. 334–339

unopposed. Despite the calls by Mahatma Gandhi for a boycott of the elections, only six had no candidate. Within the Provincial Assemblies 38 were reserved for White voters.

**Table 2.1: Central Legislative Assembly - 1920**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Democratic Party	48	Hari Singh Gour
Other parties and independents	47	
Europeans	9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	

**Source:** Schwartzberg Atlas<sup>136</sup>

Following were the Elected Members from Assam in Central Legislative Assembly in 1920. Debi Charan Barua (Assam Valley General), Girish Chandra Nag (Surma Valley General), Maulvi Amjad Ali (Muslim), George Bridge (European) and Lt. Col. D. Herbert (European)

### **General Election in India, 1923**

General elections were held in British India in November 1923 for both the Central Legislative Assembly and Provincial Assemblies. The Central Legislative Assembly had 145 seats, of which the public elected 105.<sup>137</sup>

**Table 2.2: Central Legislative Assembly-1923**

<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Seats</b>		
		Gurdwara Sikhs	2
Swaraj Party	38	Liberals	2
Indian Liberal Party	27	Unknown allegiance	20
Independents	7	Appointed members	40
Loyalists	6	<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>

**Source:** Schwartzberg Atlas<sup>138</sup>

<sup>136</sup><http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/fullscreen.html?object=110> [Accessed 18/1/18]

<sup>137</sup>"Indian Election Results. Strength of Extremists", *The Times*, 15 December 1923, p11, Issue 43525 [Accessed 19/01/2018]

Elected Members from Assam were Tarun Ram Phookan (Assam Valley General), Kamini Kumar Chanda (Surma Valley cum Shillong General), Ahmad Ali Khan (Muslim), Eustace Joseph (European) and T. A. Chalmers (European)

### **General Election India, 1926**

General elections were held in British India between 28<sup>th</sup> October and late November 1926 to elect members of the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Legislative Councils. The Swaraj Party was victorious in Provincial Council elections in Bengal and Madras, and made gains in Bihar and Orissa. However, at the national level the party saw their number of seats reduced.

**Table 2.3: Central Legislative Assembly – 1926**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Swaraj Party	38	Motilal Nehru
Nationalist Party	22	Madan Mohan Malaviya
Central Muslims and Allies	18	Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan
Independents	13	Muhammad Ali Jinnah
Minor parties,	Unattached independents,	Unknown 5
Europeans	9	Sir Darcy Lindsay
Total	105	

**Source:** Schwartzberg Atlas<sup>139</sup>

Elected members<sup>140</sup> from Assam in this Central Assembly were Tarun Ram Phookan (Assam Valley General), Srischandra Dutta (Surma Valley cum Shillong General), Maulvi Abdul Matin Chaudhury (Muslim) and T. A. Chalmers (Europeans)

<sup>138</sup><http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/fullscreen.html?object=110> [Accessed 18/01/2018]

<sup>139</sup><http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/fullscreen.html?object=110> [Accessed 18/1/18]

<sup>140</sup>Kumar, Ravindra. (1930). *Selected Works of Vithalbhai J. Patel*. New Delhi: IBH Publication. p. 50

### **General Election in India, 1930<sup>141</sup>**

General elections were held in British India in September 1930. They were boycotted by the Indian National Congress and marked by public apathy. The newly elected Central Legislative Assembly met for the first time on 14 January 1931.<sup>142</sup>

**Table 2.4: Central Legislative Assembly, 1930**

Party	Seats	Leader	
Nationalist	Party	40	Hari Singh Gour
Independent groupings	30		Abdur Rahim
Minor parties, unattached independents,	25	25	
Europeans	9		Sir Leslie Hudson
Total	104		

Source: Schwartzberg Atlas<sup>143</sup>

From Assam - Abdul Matin Chaudhury (Muslim) was the only member in this Central Assembly

### **General Election in India, 1934<sup>144</sup>**

General elections were held in British India in 1934. The Indian National Congress emerged as the largest party in the Central Legislative Assembly. The total electorate for the 1934 elections was 1,415,892, of which 1,135,899 were in contested constituencies. The total number of votes polled was 608,198. The election marked the first year in which Indian women were eligible to vote in any but a local election. Of the 81,602 enrolled women voters, 62,757 of whom were in contested constituencies, only 14,505 actually used the ballot.<sup>145</sup> Out of the 51 general seats of the general constituencies, the Congress won 37 seats.

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<sup>141</sup>"General Election in India Public Apathy", *The Times*, 26 July 1930, p12, Issue 45575

<sup>142</sup>"New Session in Delhi Friendly House, Communities and Presidency", *The Times*, 15 January 1931, p. 12, Issue, 45721

<sup>143</sup><http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/fullscreen.html?object=110> [Accessed 18/1/18]

<sup>144</sup>"Elections in India. The New Delhi Assembly, Congress Party's Position", *The Times*, 10 December 1934, p15, Issue, 46933

<sup>145</sup>*Ibid.* p. 15



The party also won 5 seats in the non-General constituencies. A Congress splinter group, the Congress Nationalist Party was the only other one to gain a significant number of seats. Most of the 30 Muslim constituencies elected independents to the Council, but within the Council, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who, shortly after the election, resumed the leadership of the moribund Muslim League from which he had previously retired, assumed leadership of the independent Muslims. Of the 32 seats filled without a contest, twelve were in Muslim constituencies, eight in European constituencies, eight in general constituencies, three reserved for landholders and one reserved for commerce.

**Table 2.5: Central Legislative Assembly - 1934**

Party	Seats	Leader
Indian National Congress	42	Bhulabhai Desai
Congress Nationalist Party	12	Madhav Shrihari Aney
Europeans	8	Sir Leslie Hudson
People's (Leading Separationists) Party	3	
Independents	41	Muhammad Ali Jinnah
Appointed members	41	
Total	147	

Source: *The Times*<sup>146</sup>

Elected Members from Assam were Kuladhar Chaliha (Assam Valley General), Nabin Chandra Bardoloi (Assam Valley General), Basanta Kumar Das (Surma Valley cum Shillong General), Abdul Matin Chaudhury (Muslim) and C. H. Witherington (European).

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<sup>146</sup>"Elections in India, The New Delhi Assembly, Congress Party's Position", *The Times*, 10 December 1934, p. 15, Issue, 46933

## **Provincial Election in India 1937<sup>147</sup>**

Provincial elections were held in British India in the winter of 1936-37 as mandated by the Government of India Act 1935. Elections were held in eleven provinces Madras, Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, United Provinces, Bombay Presidency, Assam, NWFP, Bengal, Punjab and Sindh. The results of the elections were declared in February 1937. The Indian National Congress emerged in power in eight of the provinces the three exceptions being Bengal, Punjab, and Sindh. The All India Muslim League failed to form the government in any province. The Congress ministries resigned in October and November 1939, in protest against Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's action of declaring India to be a belligerent in the Second World War without consulting the Indian people. The 1937 election was the first in which large masses of Indians were eligible to participate. An estimated 30.1 million persons, including 4.25 million women, had acquired the right to vote (12% of the total population), and 15.5 million of these, including 917,000 women, participated to exercise their franchise. Nehru admitted that while the elections were on a restricted franchise, they were a big improvement as compared to earlier elections conducted by the British raj that had been extremely restricted. The results were in favour of the Indian National Congress. Of the 1,585 seats, it won 707 (44.6%). Among the 864 seats assigned as "general" constituencies, the contested number was 739 and won 617. Of the 125 non-general constituencies contested by Congress, 59 were reserved for Muslims and in those; the Congress won 25 seats, 15 of them in the entirely Muslim North West Frontier Province. The All India Muslim League won 106 seats (6.7% of the total), placing it as second ranking party. The only other party to win

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<sup>147</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian\\_provincial\\_elections,1937](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_provincial_elections,1937) [Accessed 20/12/17]

more than 5 percentages of the assembly seats was the Unionist Party (Punjab), with 101 seats.<sup>148</sup> In Assam, the Congress won 33 seats out of 108 making it the single largest party, though it was not in a position to form a ministry. The Governor called upon Sir Muhammad Sadullah, ex Judicial Member of Assam and Leader of the Assam Valley Muslim Party to form the ministry. The Congress was a part of the ruling coalition, Bombay. In Bombay, the Congress fell just short of gaining half the seats. However, it was able to draw on the support of some small pro Congress groups to form a working majority. B.G. Kher became the first Chief Minister of Bombay.

General Election in India 1945<sup>149</sup> General elections were held in British India in December 1945 to elect members of the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. The Indian National Congress emerged as the largest party, winning 59 of the 102 elected seats. The Muslim League won all Muslim constituencies, but failed to win any other seats. Of the 13 remaining seats, 8 went to Europeans, 3 to independents, and 2 to Akali candidates in the Sikh constituencies of Punjab. This election coupled with the provincial one in 1946 proved to be a strategic victory for Jinnah and to the people who were involved in the partition. Even though Congress won, the League had united the Muslim vote and as such, it gained the negotiating power to seek a separate Muslim homeland as it became clear that a united India would prove highly unstable. The elected members later formed the Constituent Assembly of India.<sup>150</sup> These were the last general elections in British India; Consequent elections were held in 1951 in India and 1970 in Pakistan.

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<sup>148</sup> Nehru, J. (2004). *The Discovery of India*. Allahabad: Penguin Books. p. 59.

<sup>149</sup> Barbara, D. M. and Thomas R. M. (2012). *A Concise History of Modern India*. UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 212-220

<sup>150</sup> Gilmartin, D. (1998). "A Magnificent Gift: Muslim Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 40 (3): 415–436. [<https://www.jstor.org/stable/179270>].

**Table 2.6: Central Legislative Assembly -1946**

Party	Seats	Leader
Indian National Congress	59	Sarat Chandra Bose
Muslim League	30	Muhammad Ali Jinnah
Akali Dal	2	
Independents	3	
Europeans	8	Percival Joseph Griffiths
Total	102	

Source: Schwartzberg Atlas<sup>151</sup>

### **Provincial Election in India 1946<sup>152</sup>**

Provincial elections were held in British India in January 1946 to elect members of the legislative councils of British Indian provinces. The elections laid the foundation for the creation of Pakistan. The Muslim League finished second, but it had won the overwhelming majority of Muslim seats. It won nearly 1/3 of India; as such, it gained the negotiating power to begin partitioning India.<sup>153</sup> This became evident that a united India would be politically unstable. The Muslim League won a plurality of seats in the Punjab assembly, but not an overall majority, and Congress and the Unionists; Formed a coalition government this pro union coalition collapsed as soon as it was formed, which proved a nail in the coffin for Gandhi and Nehru in proving that a united India would be a stable nation.<sup>154</sup>

## **2.2 Political Scenario after Independence**

In the present transition from a traditional to a modern society elections play a vital role by spreading political consciousness, giving rise to competitive patterns of

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<sup>151</sup><http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/fullscreen.html?object=110> [Accessed 18/1/18]

<sup>152</sup>W, W. J. (1946). "The Indian Elections 1946." *The World Today*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 167–175

<sup>153</sup>Brown, J. M. (1994). *Modern India: the origins of an Asian democracy*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>154</sup>Gilmartin, D. (1998). "A Magnificent Gift: Muslim Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 40 (3): 415–436. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/179270]

recruitment and mobility. It has also to be noted that still the electoral politics in India is marked by a great deal of 'small group orientations'<sup>155</sup> reflected in local and kind group identification. Vote banks are controlled by local potentates acting as political intermediaries between the parties and the electorate, and a personalized and particularistic structure of political support in which caste identifications gain in potency under the impact of political completion and the need for a firm basis of political support. A diffusion of political values and a positive approach to power also result from this trend-giving rise to political factionalism, which cuts across communal loyalties and draws its support from a more extended network of influence and power. In such a phase of transition, party and issue identifications remain at a low level although the conditions for a larger identification are in the process of being created.<sup>156</sup> The level of development must however vary with the exposure to such factors as urbanization, education and the mass media of communication.

India had adopted the system of simple majority and single ballot for its major State and national elections. Elections and voting are among the political acts, which are conditioned by deep-seated historical and societal factors.<sup>157</sup> Since the advent of the secret ballot, a fundamental feature of free elections, it is particularly difficult to study and assess, and it has become impossible to observe in its final stages, assuming that the conventional safeguards of secrecy are preserved. Therefore, elections in India are to be studied in the historical, social, psychological and ecological setting, which bears on the electoral process.

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<sup>155</sup>Basu, A. C. (ed). (2016). *Democratic Dynasties: State, Party and Family in Contemporary Indian Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 145

<sup>156</sup>Palmer, p. 16

<sup>157</sup>Palmer, p. 18

Maurice Duverger, in a famous article written a generation back, captioned "The Influence of the Electoral System on Political Life"<sup>158</sup> noted

It is obvious that the electoral system must influence political life. The radical changes brought about in the structures of various States by the adoption of universal suffrage or the machinery of arranged election'- for instance sufficiently indicate the importance of this factor. It is however extremely difficult to analyse that influence scientifically.

The factors conditioning the political life of a country are very closely inter-related, so that any study of the effects of one of those factors considered in isolation is necessarily artificial. All that such study can do is to define tendencies likely to be influenced by operation of the other factors.<sup>159</sup>

Voting in an election is not to be considered as an exclusive and isolated event. A comprehensive view should be taken of the entire gamut of the electoral process starting from the announcement of the election and culminating in the declaration of the result. These elections reflect not only the preceding political activity and attitudes but also shape and set the limits and terms in which the subsequent politics takes place. A great deal of political activity has to be understood as preparatory to and culminating in the General Elections.<sup>160</sup>

Elections are pivotal to the Indian political system because they highlight many of its major aspects and provide insights into Indian politics and society though of course several non-political factors and considerations are also important in politics.

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<sup>158</sup>Duverger, M. (1951). The influence of the electoral system on political life, *World Congress of Sociology and Political Science*, Vol. III, 2Switzerland, 1950

<sup>159</sup>Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>160</sup>Palmer, N. D. (1972). *Comparing Political Systems*. New York: Prager Publishers. p. 106

Elections are among the principal mechanisms through which contemporary states regulate mass political action and strengthen their authority.<sup>161</sup> They open up channels between the polity and the society, between the elites and the masses, between the individual and his government. They are the major agencies of political socialization and political participation.<sup>162</sup> They determine the persons who should come into power and carry on the government of the Country. These elections are periodical opportunities for the people to express their preferences on the type of the government, in the personnel and policies of the government. India has adopted the system of universal franchise through which all adults - women as well as men - of the age of eighteen years and above is entitled to vote in Elections. Along with this we have also adopted the principle of "one man one vote". In the elections to Parliament or State Legislative Assemblies there is nothing like plural voting.

There is a striking uniformity in the constitutional framework of the Centre and the States. The States can be studied as constituent units of a large system. A closer examination of the Indian Political System reveals that each State has in fact been undergoing its own pattern of political development and its own internal political crises. The States differ markedly in respect of the spirit of their politics and in respect of interaction patterns today the State politics became a dramatic focus of attention as these States came to the forefront in view of changing political conditions and political behaviour of the voters in the States.

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<sup>161</sup>J. Krieger, (1993). *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 25-35

<sup>162</sup>Palmer, N. D. (1976). *Elections and Political Development*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press. 26-31

India held her first General Elections to the first Lok Sabha since its independence on 15 August, 1947 formed its Lok Sabha in April 1952.<sup>163</sup> After the first general elections held in the country, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the first elected Prime Minister of the country, his party winning 44.99% (47,665,951) of the votes. The Indian National Congress (INC) stormed into power in the first Lok Sabha elections with 365 seats. With this, India's grand old party managed to secure 45 per cent of the total votes polled. An electoral participation of 44.87 per cent was reported across the votes cast. The Lok Sabha, which was constituted on April 17, 1952, lasted for its full term until April 4, 1957.

### **2.3 Constitutional Framework**

India is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary system of government, and at the heart of the system is a commitment to hold regular, free and fair elections. The Election Commission of India is an Independent Constitutional Authority since 25 January 1950.<sup>164</sup> The Constitution provides for Chief Election Commissioner and one or more Election Commissioners to be appointed. The Commission consisted of Chief Election Commissioner until 1989 when for the first time two Election Commissioners were appointed. Currently the Commission has a Chief Election Commissioner and two Commissioners, the latter appointed in 1993. Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners enjoy the status of a Judge of the Supreme Court of India.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Lok Sabha Election-1952*

<sup>164</sup>Election Commission of India([www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in)) [Accessed 20/10/2017]

<sup>165</sup>Kashyap, Subhash C., Polls in Times of War, *The Hindustan Times*, 6 July 1999. p33



The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only by Parliamentary impeachment. The Election Commission is responsible for the conduct of elections to parliament and state legislatures and to the offices of the President and Vice-President. The Election Commission prepares, maintains and periodically updates the Electoral Roll, which shows who is entitled to vote, supervises the nomination of candidates, registers political parties, monitors the election campaign, including candidates funding. It also facilitates the coverage of the election process by the media, organizes the polling booths where voting takes place, and looks after the counting of votes and the declaration of results. All this is done to ensure that elections can take place in an orderly and fair manner.

It is further provided that before General Election to the Lok Sabha, to each State Legislative Assembly and before each biennial election to a State Legislative Council, the President may after consultation with the Election Commission appoint such 'Regional Commissioners' as may be deemed necessary. Conditions of service and tenure of office of these Commissioners are determined by the President, subject to provisions of law made in this connection by Parliament, provided that the Chief Commissioner once appointed can only be removed on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court and his conditions of service cannot be varied to his disadvantage during his term of service.

### **Powers, Duties and Functions**

The Election Commission enjoys complete autonomy and is insulated from any kind of executive interference. The body also functions as a quasi-judiciary body in matters of electoral disputes and other matters involving the conduct of elections. Its recommendations and opinions are binding on the President of India. The Election

Commission is responsible for planning and executing a whole amount of complex operations that go into the conduct of elections. Apart from conducting elections to representative bodies, the Election Commission has been on many occasions, called upon by the Courts to oversee and execute elections to various governing bodies of other autonomous organizations, such as Syndicates of Universities, statutory professional bodies etc.<sup>166</sup> The following are the principal functions of the Election Commission of India: (some of them are discussed below)

- Demarcation of Constituencies
- Preparation of Electoral Rolls
- Recognition of Political parties and allotment of symbols
- Scrutiny of nomination papers
- Conduct of polls
- Scrutiny of election expenses of candidates

### **Demarcation of Constituencies<sup>167</sup>**

Under Article 82 of the Constitution, the Parliament by law enacts a Delimitation Act after every census. After commencement of the Act, the Central Government constitutes a Delimitation Commission. This Delimitation Commission demarcates the boundaries of the Parliamentary Constituencies as per provisions of the

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<sup>166</sup>Gupta, R.L. (1988): *Electoral Politics in India*, New Delhi: Published by Tilak Wasan, Discovery Publishing House, pp. 140-145

<sup>167</sup>Laxmikanth, M. (2017). *Indian Polity*, New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill Publication. Pp. 320-325

Delimitation Act. The present delimitation of constituencies has been done based on 2011 census figures under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2004.

### **Preparation of Electoral Rolls<sup>168</sup>**

The constitution provides for one General Electoral Roll for every territorial constituency for election to Parliament or State Legislature and no person is discriminated for inclusion in such a roll or in any special electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or any of them. For this purpose, the commission every year prepares electoral roll. The electoral roll is a list of all people in the constituency who are registered to vote in Indian Elections. Only those people with their names on the electoral roll are allowed to vote. The electoral roll is normally revised every year to add the names of those who are to turn 18 on 1 January of that year or have moved into a constituency and to remove the names of those who have died or moved out of a constituency.

### **Recognition of Political Parties and Allotment of Symbols**

Political parties are registered with the Election Commission under the law. The Commission ensures inner party democracy in their functioning by insisting upon them to hold their organizational elections at periodic intervals. Political Parties so registered with it are granted recognition at the State and National levels by the Election Commission on the basis of their poll performance at general elections according to criteria prescribed by it. The Anti-defection law, passed in 1985,

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<sup>168</sup>Laxmikanth, p. 400

prevents MPs or MLAs elected as candidates from one party forming or joining a new party, unless they comprise more than one-third of the original party in the legislature.

### **Conduct of Polls**

Polling for Lok Sabha is held on a number of different days in different constituencies, to enable the security forces and those monitoring the election to keep law and order and ensure that voting during the election is fair. Polling for State Assemblies, except for very large states, are generally held on a single day. After the polling has finished, the votes are counted under the supervision of Returning Officers and Observers appointed by the Election Commission. After the counting of votes is over, the Returning Officer declares the name of the candidate to whom the largest numbers of votes has been given as the winner, and as having been returned by the constituency to the concerned house.<sup>169</sup>

### **Who Can Vote in Election?**

The democratic system in India is based on the principle of universal adult suffrage; that any citizen over the age of 18 can vote in an election (before 1989 the age limit was 21). The right to vote is irrespective of caste, creed, religion or gender. The Commission, as a part of its quasi-judicial jurisdiction, also settles disputes between the splinter groups of such recognized parties. Election Commission ensures a level playing field for the political parties in election fray, through strict observance by them of a Model Code of Conduct evolved with the consensus of political parties. The Commission holds periodical consultations with the political parties on matters connected with the conduct of elections; compliance of Model Code of Conduct and

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<sup>169</sup>Election Commission of India. (2000). Major Events and New Initiative 1996-2000, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India

new measures proposed to be introduced by the Commission on election related matters.

## **2.4 Electoral Democracy in India**

India today in its twenty first century celebrates seventy years of its sovereign democracy, which came into existence on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950. Like many other countries in the East, in some respects democracy in India is an outcome of colonization and western influences. Its true beginning can be traced with the coming of the East India Company in 1612. The government of East India Company though exercised a colonial authoritarianism still it marked a slow growth of constitution.

This is the political development of democracy. The very idea of democracy was alien to most of India's electorates. Constitutional democracy based on universal adult franchise did not emerge in India as a result of popular pressures/movement politics.<sup>170</sup> The idea of democracy like that of socialism, development, secularism were the political choices of the elites, which they brought to the people. People have accepted democracy, and have provided it legitimacy while voting, not individually but in groups.<sup>171</sup>

India is the largest democracy in the world. The constitution has provided for a form of Government by the people's representatives democratically elected on the basis of universal suffrage, irrespective of caste, creed, race or sex. The determination of the founding fathers of the Indian Republic to lay down the foundations of a full-blooded

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<sup>170</sup>Bhargava, R. (2010). India's secular constitution. In A. Vanaik and R. Bhargava (Eds.), *Understanding contemporary India: A critical perspective* (pp. 19–48). New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

<sup>171</sup>Sunil, Khilnani. (1997). *Idea of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Group. p. 17.

democracy, i.e. the emphasis on democracy is evident in the very preamble to the Constitution.<sup>172</sup> To quote the late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi on her broadcast to the Nation on January 18, 1977:<sup>173</sup>

Our system rests on the belief that Governments derive their power from the People and that the people give expression to their sovereign will every few years freely and without hindrance, by choosing the Government they want and by indicating their preference for policies.

The constitutional scheme in India makes it clear that the legislature and the executive authority of the Centre as well as the States has been placed in the hands of the representatives of the people chosen at regular intervals by means of free and fair elections. The introduction of universal adult suffrage and the abolition of communal electorates are the most progressive and radical features of the India Constitution. By introducing the universal suffrage, the constitution has made India the world's biggest democracy. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President noted the importance of franchise in the constituent assembly:

Some people have doubted the wisdom of adult franchise. Personally, although I look upon it as an experiment the result of which no one will be able to forecast today, I am not dismayed by it. I know the village people who will constitute the bulk of this vast Electorate. In my opinion, our people possess intelligence and common sense. They also have a culture, which the sophisticated people of today may not

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<sup>172</sup>Rudolph, S.H. and Rudolph, L.I. (2002). New dimensions in Indian democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 52–66.

<sup>173</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/133087/7/07\\_chapter%202.pdf.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/133087/7/07_chapter%202.pdf.pdf) [Accessed 18/12/2017]

appreciate but which is solid. They are able to take measure of their own interest and also of the interests of the country at large if things are explained to them.<sup>174</sup>

In December 1969 and taking into account the experience of four general elections and 'mini' general election (February 1969) the then Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Sen Verma expressed sentiments similar to those of late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, he said:

The electorate of this country possesses strong common sense and native intelligence and the strength and stamina of their character cannot but evoke respect and administration.<sup>175</sup>

In the modern period free and fair elections is the hallmark of a working democracy. The Supreme Court of India has often emphasized the importance of free and fair elections in democracy. In P.R. Belagali v. B.D. Jatti Justice Grover observed:<sup>176</sup>

Free and fair elections are the very foundation of democratic institutions and just as it is said that justice must not only be done, but must also seem to be done, similarly elections should not only be fairly and properly held, but should also seem to be so conducted as to inspire confidence in the minds of the electors that everything has been above board and has been done to ensure free elections.

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<sup>174</sup>CA.D. XI, p.989.[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/66073/7/07\\_chapter%201.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/66073/7/07_chapter%201.pdf) [Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>175</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, December 8, 1969, p. 15.

<sup>176</sup>AIR 1971, SC 1348 ( URL: <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/709335/>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

The above discussion makes it clear that democracy contemplates free and fair election so as to enable the voters to vote for candidates of their choice. Democracy can indeed function only upon the faith that elections are free and fair. To ensure it three necessary components have been treated to be essential:

**First**, a set of electoral law and rules generally accepted throughout the political community. It ensures the free and fair elections. If the electoral law and rules are not observed faithfully the democracy itself will disappear.

**Second**, there should be an independent judiciary to interpret electoral law.

**Third**, an honest and competent independent administration to run election. These conditions are ideal conditions to ensure free and fair elections.

In India, such conditions for a free and fair election and working democracy are not only formally provided for in the constitution, they are in fact available to the people. First, India has a well-settled electoral law and rules contained in the constitution and in a variety of statutes and rules, Articles 327 and 328 of the Constitution of India deals with it. Secondly, there are express provisions under the Indian Constitution for an independent judiciary. Article 329 of the Constitution of India deals with this, Thirdly, there is provision under Article 324 of the Constitution of India for an independent Election Commission to run elections.<sup>177</sup>

However, despite the general feeling of satisfaction with the working of the democracy and the conduct of elections in free and fair manner, it cannot be claimed either that the system itself is perfect or that there is no ground for complaint in regard to the manner in which it has been actually operated. There has been a great deal of

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<sup>177</sup>Laxmikath, P. 410



discussion on the subject in the Parliament and in other forums. There are various questions, which have become "a matter of national concern and debate in order to ensure the proper working of Indian democracy through the free and fair elections. One considerable issue with regard to voter's participation in elections is that in each of the thirteen general elections so far held in India, the turnout of voters has not been very unsatisfactory.

There is no denying the fact that the degree of voter's participation in elections is one of the major indices of the measure of success achieved by democracy in a country. This disappointingly low percentage of voting in our elections undoubtedly reflects the general disillusionment with the working of democracy in the country. Therefore, it is obvious that if democracy is to survive and flourish in our country, there must necessarily be a whole-hearted participation and involvement of the people at large in the electoral process. Mass participation of voters, elections has obvious advantages. It can make our democracy more deeply entrenched in the active interest of the common person as it is at present, and help in checking the growing frustration with the working of our democratic institutions.

India at the time of decolonization suffered from the absence of a homogeneous population, an industrialized economy, high levels of education or a shared civic culture.<sup>178</sup> Notwithstanding these limitations, democracy in India has not only survived but has grown in a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic society. The presence of democratic practice and routine has been the most remarkable fact, which

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<sup>178</sup>Zoya Hasan, (2002), 'Introduction: Conflict Pluralism and the Competitive Party System in India', in Zoya Hasan (ed), *Parties and Party Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 1.

provides India with a distinction among other developing countries.<sup>179</sup> The deepening of Indian democracy can be well defined in terms of rising political participation and high voter turnouts.

The major factor influencing the rising political consciousness of the poor is the growing realization that state can play an important role in dispensing public goods and an increasing awareness that politics can be a route to greater self-respect, dignity and confidence in protecting their interests.<sup>180</sup> This has been the running theme in the literature of electoral politics in India and has been dubbed as the ‘second democratic upsurge’/‘democracy from below’ by the election analysts.<sup>181</sup> Elections in India have witnessed greater level of participation and contestation not only in terms of quantifiable number but also in terms of wider sociological base. Elections in India have received wider acceptance of the people as they have strengthened the very basis of the democracy.<sup>182</sup>

## 2.5 Phases of Indian Electoral Democracy

Indian democracy has witnessed four major phases of electoral systems.<sup>183</sup> The changes in electoral patterns and trends during the last six decades of Indian polity can be viewed in three distinct phases: First Phase of Electoral Democracy (1952 to

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<sup>179</sup>Singh, M.P. and Rekha, S. (eds), (2003). *India at Polls-Parliamentary Election in the Federal Phase*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, p. 245.

<sup>180</sup>Hasan, J, *Op.Cit.*, p.6.

<sup>181</sup>Yadav, Y. (1999). ‘Electoral Politics in the Time of Change-India’s Third Electoral System, 1989-99’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 34/35, August 21-28, pp. 2393-2399.

<sup>182</sup>Kumar, A. (2002). ‘Introduction’, in Ajay Kumar, D. D. Khana and Gertw Kueck, (eds), *Political Parties and Party System*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 21.

<sup>183</sup>Yogendra Yadav, (1999), ‘Electoral Politics in the Time of Change-India’s Third Electoral System, 1989-99’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 34/35, August 21-28, pp. 2393-2399.

1967), Second Phase of Electoral Democracy (1967 to 1989), Third Phase of Electoral Democracy (1989-2009) and Fourth Phase 2014 onwards.

### **First Phase of Electoral Democracy (1952 to 1967)**

The first electoral phase of Indian polity included four general elections, which was known as one party dominance system. During the period from 1952 to 1967, Indian democracy on the front of party politics witnessed single party dominance. Indian National Congress (INC) being the pole around which all the political contests used to take place. This was an era of limited democracy, which means that the democracy was installed in its institutional form without its historical basis.<sup>184</sup>

Thus, in Lok Sabha, the party secured 364 seats out of 489 or 74.4 percentage of seats. In state assemblies, the INC won 2246 out of 3283 seats or 68.4 percentages of seats. The Congress Party held dominant position for next fifteen years, through three general elections and number of Vidhan Sabha elections in the states.<sup>185</sup> It secured more than forty-five percentages of popular votes casted in the first three parliamentary elections and became the ruling party in majority of the state legislatures.<sup>186</sup>

**Table 2.7: Electorates, Voting Percentage, Wining Party and Vote Share (1952-1962)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Electorates</b>	<b>Voted</b>	<b>Total Contestant</b>	<b>Wining Party</b>	<b>Vote Share</b>	<b>Polling Percentage</b>
1952	173212343	105950083	1874	INC	44.99%	44.87%
1957	193652179	120513915	1519	INC	47.78%	45.44%
1962	216361569	119904284	1985	INC	44.72%	55.42%

Source: Compiled Statistical Report of Lok Sabha Election 1952, 1957 and 1962(www.eci.nic.in)

<sup>184</sup> Ajay Kumar, p. 24.

<sup>185</sup> Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003, p.171.

<sup>186</sup> Hasan, *Op.Cit.*, p. 6

During the first phase, limited choice was available for electorates in the sense that Congress had an all-encompassing social base, which constituted the support across the cleavages of caste, class, region and religion. The dominance of Congress during the pre-1967 phase could be explained by the factors like its legacy regarding nationalist struggle, its centrist ideology, its commitment to democracy, secularism, minority rights, a federalism with centralized tendency, mixed economy, above all its nation-building agenda and charismatic leadership.<sup>187</sup>

### **Second Phase of Electoral Democracy (1967 to 1989)**

The second phase witnessed significant changes taking place having long-term implications, both in terms of the nature of party politics and the emergent social cleavages. The period was marked by the passage from single party dominance to multi-party politics and intensification of party competition, the fragmentation of parties and the rise of regional parties of non-elites. The results of 1967 parliamentary elections were dramatic. The Congress Party failed to secure majority in eight states, namely Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala and Tamil Nadu out of sixteen states, on the one hand and its majority at the Centre was reduced to narrow margin of fifty four percentage Lok Sabha seats, on the other.<sup>188</sup>

**Table 2.8: Electorates, Voting Percentage, Wining Party and Vote Share (1967-1984)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Electorates</b>	<b>Voted</b>	<b>Total Contestant</b>	<b>Wining Party</b>	<b>Seat Won</b>	<b>Vote Share</b>	<b>Polling Percentage</b>
1967	250207401	152724611	2369	INC	283	40.78%	61.04%
1971	274189132	151536802	2784	INC	352	53.14%	55.27%
1977	321174327	194263915	2439	BLD	295	41.32%	60.49%
1980	356205329	202752893	4629	INC(I)	353	46.02%	56.92%
1984	379540608	241246887	5312	INC	404	49.10%	63.56%

Source: Compiled Statistical Report of Lok Sabha Election 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980 and 1984

<sup>187</sup>ibid., p. 9

<sup>188</sup>Narang, N, p. 324

In Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana and Madras, various regional and smaller parties forged alliances and then turning into coalition governments at the state levels. However, the Congress Party formed government with the support of independents and others in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.<sup>189</sup> The decline of Congress was further accelerated with the split in 1969 that led to the centralizing personalized mode of leadership in the party. It also marked the decline in ideological and organizational sense of the Congress. The national elections in 1971 saw a restoration of third Congress majority in Lok Sabha with 43.7 percentages of votes and 352 seats in the popular House. One of the key factors in the resurgence of popularity of Congress Party, was charismatic personality or personality cult of Indira Gandhi and her slogan, 'Garibi Hatao' (remove poverty)<sup>190</sup>.

With the decline of Congress, the vacuum was filled by the emergence of the regional state level parties as well as the parties at the national level. Mainly four types of parties came up due to the decline of catchall Congress party, also called a 'rainbow' party. In the first place, non-Congress coalitions emerged at the national level in the form of Bharatiya Jan Sangh and later on Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1990s.<sup>191</sup> Other three kinds of parties also came out at the regional level, the first among them were the parties formed by Congress dissidents, for instance, Bangla Congress, Kerala Congress, The Utkal Congress, The Telangana Rashtriya Samithi, Tamil Manila Congress, The Trinamool Congress, and so forth. The second type of parties referred to the tribal parties, which came into existence in

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<sup>189</sup>Kumar, S. (2004). *Parties and Coalition Politics: A Comparative Study*, New Delhi: Uppal Publication. p.483.

<sup>190</sup>E. Sridharan, "The Fragmentation of Indian Party System 1952-99: Seven Competing Explanations", in Zoya Hasan (ed.), (2008). *Parties and Party Politics in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University, p. 481.

<sup>191</sup>M. P. Singh and Rekha, Saxena, op.cit., p. 252.

order to give impetus to the tribal identity and worked as catalysts to demand more concessions from the centre.

They were namely Naga National Council, Mizo National Front and All Party Hill Leaders Conference. The third types of regional parties have been larger political formations based on ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic lines. For instance Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham, (DMK) and All India Anna Munnetra Kazhagham (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, Telugu Desham Party in Andhra Pradesh, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Jharkhand Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in Bihar, Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) and Lok Dal in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana are the parties with bigger and well-knit organizations and provide stable challenge to Congress in states.<sup>192</sup> In Assam, formation Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) after six years long Assam Agitation was another important political challenge towards the long-term hegemony of congress in the region.<sup>193</sup>

The system became somewhat more competitive due to the rise of state parties. During this phase, polity became more inclusive as a tilt of balancing forces. Democracy moved in the direction of rural India and it moved to become mass democracy. Elitist mode of politics was replaced by mass mode of politics based on populist promises and slogans.<sup>194</sup> The emergent groups, especially the middle class peasantry and that too predominantly in north India, were the beneficiary classes of green-revolution process and the implementation of land reforms. Moreover, their

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<sup>192</sup>Ibid. p. 253

<sup>193</sup>Ibid. p. 255

<sup>194</sup>Atu, Kohli, *Op.Cit.*,

numerical strength in the electoral democracy also paved the way for the rise of state politics in late 60s and early 70s.

The remarkable changes at the institutional level could be attributed to the decline of Congress in organizational, institutional, and ideological terms. Congress was able to come to power afterwards. It, however, did not come to power with the same preponderance that it had enjoyed in the first two decades of the polity. Its decline started with 1967 elections onwards although it was gradual in many ways and directions.<sup>195</sup> After 1967, Congress found itself under pressure and strains to accommodate various newly emergent socio-economic forces and upcoming multidirectional changes due to its internal weakness. Its internal pluralist and federal organizational processes were undermined due to the centralizing tendencies.

Congress faced the problem of articulation and accommodation of newly mobilized and politicized sections of society. Its decline further could be explained in terms of its failure of generating a capacity to accommodate rising expectations of the electorates. Ideologically, it was an era of populism and the erosion of ideologies.<sup>196</sup> There has been an *Ambedkarization* of Indian politics due to the implementation of recommendations of Mandal Commission, rise of Hindutva politics in the form of rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and in 1992 demolition of Babri Mosque and finally the implementation of neoliberal economic policies oriented towards market reforms

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<sup>195</sup> Atul, Kohli, (2000), 'Centralisation and Powerlessness: India's Democracy in Comparative Perspective', in Zoya Hasan (ed), *Politics and the State in India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications. pp. 250-255

<sup>196</sup> Yadav, op.cit., p. 2394.

as a result of the failure of planned/command economy that was followed in Nehruvian India.<sup>197</sup>

On the political front, Congress no longer remained the 'natural party of governance' as the non-Congress parties could now successfully win the elections and also run the government. The period has been characterized as 'post-Congress polity'. The rise of bi-nodal party system was a feature of this polity. The BJP as the main competitor of Congress emerged as the single largest party at the centre in 1998 and 1999. The decade of 1990s witnessed the rise of BJP due to its *Hindutva* nationalism in the backdrop of demolition of Babri mosque and its opposition to the implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendations.<sup>198</sup>

The rise of the BJP has been viewed as a process of the party occupying the centrist political space vacated by the Congress. It was true that the period witnessed the fastest growth of the BJP as an electoral force. It coincided with the phase of the most rapid decline of the Congress. On the contrary, the party was reduced to third position in UP, behind the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in the recent Assembly elections.

The rise of BJP was multi-dimensional in the sense that it has over the decades asserted itself in geographical, social and political terms. BJP is the only party, which has observed a consistent rise in its vote share since 1984.<sup>199</sup> In its geographical scope, it has gone beyond Hindi-heartland and has registered its presence in states like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka as its core. In social terms, it was no more an

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<sup>197</sup>ibid., p. 2394.

<sup>198</sup>Hasan, *Op.Cit.* p. 23.

<sup>199</sup>Oliver Heath, (2002), 'Anatomy of BJP's Rise to Power: Social, Regional and Political Expansion in 1990's', in Zoya Hasan, *Politics and the State in India*, pp. 232-256.



upper caste, urban-based party. BJP has made significant headways in other social groups especially due to its electoral alliances. It has created a new kind of 'majoritarianism' and its rise to power has created a new social bloc beyond its Hindutva agenda based on the notion of cultural agenda.<sup>200</sup>

Now, BJP has not been concentrating only on its Hindutva agenda but also looking for the electoral gains on the basis of governance and leadership. It has also made attempt to broaden its support base among the marginal communities including the tribal community in the states like Orissa and Gujarat as evident in the last parliamentary and assembly elections in the states. The BJP has found the way to come to power on the basis of forging right kind of alliances while moderating its ideology. Congress, however, has been the only party with an all India presence in the organizational and institutional terms and BJP nowhere stands with Congress in this particular regard.

The bipolar system has varied from one state to another state although the differences have been very slight. Bipolarities at the state level, however, were on the scene from 1967 onwards, but by the end of 80s and during 90s, they had stabilized themselves firmly. This trend again signified a post-Congress polity, in fact more emphatically. In states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, we have had a bipolar competition between Congress and Jan Sangh since 1967, which got replaced by a competition between the Congress and the BJP in 1990s. In the states like Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, the bipolar contest is between the Congress led alliances and Left parties led alliances. In another set of states namely, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Assam, the political competition took place

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<sup>200</sup>Yadav, op.cit., p. 2395.

between the Congress and regional parties. With the emergence of BJP, the party system has become two plus party systems.

The last decade was also marked by the expansion of choice in front of electorates in the form of multi-party electoral contests. This period has witnessed the rise of the era of coalition governments. This was the reality, which seems to be accepted by both the major political parties being Congress and BJP or in terms of party coalition's viz. United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and National Democratic Alliance (NDA), respectively. By the end of 1980s with the practice of electoral politics the nature of party competition has changed to a great extent in the sense that political contests which used to take place between various political parties now has been replaced by a competition between alliances and more aptly between winnable alliances or coalitions.<sup>201</sup> The 1990s was an era of political instability as a result of the formation of minority governments. The Congress led UPA government, formed in 2009, was the third coalitional government formed in a row since 1989.

### **Third Phase of Electoral Democracy (1989-2009)**

The third phase of electoral democracy was very significant for the deepening and expansion of Indian electoral base. Changes have been witnessed at two levels first, at institutional level and second at the level of the social cleavages. The decade of 1990s experienced the 'second democratic upsurge'. The 1991 general elections marked the beginning of the third phase of electoral democracy, with certain new significant voting trends in Indian politics. The national elections of 1989 marked water shed in national politics in general and party system, in particular. For the first time since

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<sup>201</sup>E. Sridharan, (2002), 'The Fragmentation of Indian Party System, 1952 - 1999', in Zoya Hasan, (ed), *Parties and Party Politics in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 485.

independence, a 'hung Parliament' was thrown in which no party got absolute majority.<sup>202</sup>

The Congress Party's strength reduced to 39.5 per cent of votes with 197 seats in Lok Sabha and emerged as a single largest party in the popular House but decided to sit in the opposition benches. The Janata Dal-led National Front (comprising Janata Dal, regional and minor parties) formed the Union Cabinet under the leadership of V. P. Singh, supported from outside by both the BJP, on the right and the CPI and the CPI (M), on the left.<sup>203</sup> On the political front, Congress no longer remained the 'natural party of governance' as the non- Congress parties could now successfully win the elections and also run the government. The period has been characterized as 'post-Congress polity'. The rise of bi-nodal party system was a feature of this polity. The BJP as the main competitor of Congress emerged as the single largest party at the centre in 1998 and 1999.<sup>204</sup> It was true that the period witnessed the fastest growth of the BJP as an electoral force. It coincided with the phase of the most rapid decline of the Congress. In Orissa, Assam and Karnataka, the BJP grew rapidly, more often than not by consolidating the anti-Congress political forces.

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<sup>202</sup>M.L. Ahuja. (2000). *Handbook of General Elections and Electoral Reforms*, New Delhi: Mittal Publication. p. IX.

<sup>203</sup>Rajni Kothari, "Governance: It is time to Go Back to the People", *The Times of India*, 3 November 1997

<sup>204</sup>Hasan, op.cit, p. 23.

**Table 2.9: Election-wise Total Electorates, Voting Percentage, Wining Party and Their Vote Share (1989-2009)**

Year	Total Electorates	Voted	Total Contestant	Largest Wining Party	Vote Share	Win	Polling Percentage
1989	498906129	309050495	3713	INC	39.53%	197	61.95%
1991	498363801	282700942	8668	INC	36.26%	232	56.73%
1996	592572288	343308090	13952	BJP	20.29%	161	57.94%
1998	605880192	375441739	4750	BJP	25.59%	182	61.97%
1999	619536847	371669104	4648	BJP	23.75%	182	59.99%
2004	671487930	389342364	5435	INC	26.53%	145	58.07%
2009	716985101	417159281	8070	INC	28.55%	206	63.58%

Source: Compiled Statistical Report of Lok Sabha Election 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, and 2009

The ‘third phase’ of electoral democracy in India has also marked the ‘naturalization of electoral democracy’. The electorates have created their own meta-narratives of democracy and social justice, while discarding the established western parameters of democracy. The ‘vernacular’ politicians like Ram Vilas Paswan, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Kanshi Ram and of course, Mayawati have created their own vocabularies and idioms of democracy and social justice. Reliance on the western dynamics to judge the working of their democracy would no longer work.<sup>205</sup>

### **Evolution of Coalition/ Alliance Politics and Multi-Party System (1996-2004)**

The 1999 Lok Sabha elections marked a significant break in the succession of ‘hung Parliament’. The state parties aggressively pursued for the development interest of their respective areas, joined hands with the BJP, marked the advent of ‘electoral federalism’, through skilful bargaining into areas, which had hitherto, resisted its effort at expansion. The major national party pursued a comprehensive strategy of alliance and seat sharing arrangement by accepting to field, fewer candidates in the

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<sup>205</sup>Ibid. p. 237

bargain. In a way, the BJP decided to field 340 candidates only in 1999 elections as compared to 384 in 1998 and 471 in 1996. A new structural development took place in Indian party system, when a combination of more than twenty parties, decided to jointly contest the elections on the formula of seats sharing arrangement, to avoid confrontation and had Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and where all the partners agreed to project Vajpayee as the Prime Ministerial candidate in 13<sup>th</sup> parliamentary elections. The NDA secured clear mandate in 13th Lok Sabha election, which was more durable than its previous experience, because of thirty-plus members in the Lower House. The INC faced a stunning blow due to extension of party's current ideology with the wishes and whims of Sonia Gandhi and her family.<sup>206</sup> The Congress Party registered its worst ever performance winning only 114 seats in the House of People.

### **Bi-Polar led National Alliance System - (2004 to 2009)**

A very narrow range of outcomes came to the fore in 14<sup>th</sup> general elections, between the NDA's 'defeat' and the UPA's victory. The tally of Congress Party and its allies was 222, with a combined vote share of 36.5 percentages. The party improved its tally from 114 seats to 145, an improvement of thirty-one seats as compared to the 1999 parliamentary elections. The NDA got 189 seats only and there was real decline in its popular vote share, from 40.8 per cent to 35.9 per cent, a fall of 4.9 per cent. The BJP, on its own lost 44 (forty-four) seats to finish at 138, compared to the previous number 182, which was much higher in the 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections. This indicated a real erosion of its popular support base. The allies of BJP lost much more in term of seats,

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<sup>206</sup>Gehlot, N.S. (2002). *New Challenges to Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, p. 49.

as their tally fell from 144 seats to just fifty-one Lok Sabha seats.<sup>207</sup> On the other side, the Congress' allies, DMK, TRS, NCP and RJD won 118 seats for the UPA, sealing the fate of the NDA.<sup>208</sup> The anti-NDA parties showed their full faith in the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and agreed to form the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The Left parties also decided to support the UPA government from outside, but accepted the post of the Speaker. On 22 May 2004, the Congress Party-led UPA, one of the largest combinations of eighteen parties, formed Council of Ministers, under the Prime Ministership of Manmohan Singh. Sonia Gandhi was made the chairperson of the UPA and specially constituted Body-National Advisory Committee (NAC), to look after the functioning of the government. A Common Minimum Programme was devised to run government.

The Manmohan Singh government confronted with various problems, which came from partners, particularly from the Left parties. They had divergent views on foreign policy and economic reforms. The Left Front decided to withdraw support from the UPA on the issue of Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal on 9 July 2008. However, Prime Minister and his colleagues managed to win 'vote of confidence' with the support of Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in July 2008. The 15th Lok Sabha elections were over on 13 May 2009, by going through five phases. The average vote percentage in the elections happened to be around fifty-seven percentage.<sup>209</sup> Unlike 2004 national elections, almost all parties

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<sup>207</sup>Yadav, Y. (2004). "The Elusive Mandate of 2004", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 51, 18 December 2004, p. 5385.

<sup>208</sup>Chawla, Prabhu. (2004). "Sonia Shining", *India Today*, Vol. XXIX, No. 20, 24 May, p. 27.

<sup>209</sup>Editorial, "Overall Reality of Indian Democracy", *Mainstream*, Vol. XLVII, No. 22, 16 May 2009, p.2.

hedged their bets, leaving room for post-electoral possibilities. Both, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress Party shed baggage, primarily to Third Front.

The national elections of 2009 saw a strange mixture of old and new, short-term and long-term friends, alliances and enemies, bound with or against each other, making it one of the most puzzling and complex elections. There was “no national level alliance”, but only region-specific. Both the alliance maker parties as the BJP and the Congress and even the Left Front, preferred alliance only to bridge ‘territorial gap’. Neither the BJP, nor the Congress Party, even the CPI (M) was willing to cede space in their respective areas of strength, to their friends or allies. The Fourth Front formed by the trio leadership of Lalu-Paswan-Mulayam, based on allies, did not encroach each other’s space and was limited to their specific regions<sup>210</sup>. The Congress Party already declared in January 2009 that there would be no national level alliance, but seat-sharing adjustments would be restricted to regional levels. Similarly, the BJP alliance arrangement was limited to region specific. The Third Front failed to take any concrete shape, despite the efforts made by Left parties particularly, the CPI (M) and the CPI. It is because, the constituents of Third Front particularly, CPI (M) looked forward to the post-poll scenario, throughout its electoral campaign. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), claimed to support the Third Front, but refused to have an alliance.<sup>211</sup> However; it lacked a formal organization, which took place after the elections. In the meantime, each of its constituents engaged in friendly contest with non-Congress and non-BJP parties. Each partner of Third Front fought the elections

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<sup>210</sup>K.K. Kailash, “Alliances and Lessons of Election 2009”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIV, No. 39, 26 September 2009, p.52.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid. p. 55

on its own in their respective states and then to form a formal organization.<sup>212</sup> The national elections in 2009 produced surprised results. The predictions proved to be unrealistic.<sup>213</sup> The Congress Party led multi-party United Progressive Alliance won spectacular victory, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh set to form government at the Centre for second time. It was a huge set back to the NDA on the one hand; and the CPI (M)-led Third Front decimated on the other.<sup>214</sup> The UPA had a tally of 262 seats, with Congress Party, itself getting 206 Lok Sabha seats. The NDA got only 157 seats, with BJP's own score being 116. While, the Third Front reduced to just eighty seats. The Fourth Front sought to develop a separate political identity, in order to enhance its bargaining power with the Congress, brought down to just twenty-seven Lok Sabha seats.<sup>215</sup>

#### **Fourth Phase- 2014 Onwards**

Outcome of 2014 Lok Sabha election in India for its 16<sup>th</sup> Lower House was spectacular. The BJP success was possible among other factors due to the party's electoral strategy in respect of change social engineering, which could be termed as transfer nation inside the party, as a result the party could not attract and build confidence among cross sections of caste and classes. With strong power of decision making of Narendra Modi as a leader could consolidate support among the lower and the middle class of the society.

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<sup>212</sup>Ramashray, Roy. "Regional Base and National Dream: Alliance Formation, 2009 National Elections", in Paul Wallace and Ramashray Roy (eds.). (2011). *India's 2009 Elections, Coalition Politics, Party Competition and Congress Continuity*, New Delhi: Sage Publications. p.38.

<sup>213</sup>Kamala Prasad, "Lok Sabha Poll 2009: UPA Returns to Power", *Mainstream*, Vol. XLVII, No. 24, 30 May 2009, p.4.

<sup>214</sup>*The Times of India*, 17 May 2009.

<sup>215</sup>Venkitesh, Ramakrishnan, "Congress Resurgence", *Frontline*, Vol.26, No.11, 5 June 2009, p. 4



The 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election was moved on fifth march 2014 during the tenure of Congress lead UPA government, which had been in power since 2004. During the second term of UPA the Government had to face major issues of corruption and lack of governance. In 2014 election was held a midst of a host of burning issues like slowing down of Indian economy, high inflation, the perception of policy paralyses and administrative mismanagement.

The Prime Minister Dr. Monmohan Singh was criticized by opposition in intelligence, media, etc. as the weakest ever Prime Minister in India who even could not take any major decision without the engrossment from his high command. This indecisive character could even encourage high financial frauds. Forgiving more time to counter the allegation of corruption and financial scandals made by the opposition and media the implementing many, pro-poor welfare policies and schemes and the grassroots level suffered drastically. Under these circumstances the party which had enjoyed unshared governmental power both in centre and in most of the states in first two decades of India's independence and continue to be the main political force had to face a miserable defeat in the hands of a party which had won only two Lok Sabha seats in 1984. In 1991 election, BJP emerged as the single congress party and formed BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government. During this period Indian electoral politics started changing significantly in terms of party fragmentation for the emergence of identity politics and growth of regional and state political parties. India entered into a phase of collation government during this period. Congress, which was once single dominant party, had to take the help of different parties in forming the governments. The UPA and NDA, the Congress and the BJP remained as the principal parties by contesting and wining majority seats.

**Table 2.10: Total Electorates, Percentage of Voting in 2014 Lok Sabha**

Year	Total Electorates	Voted	Total Contestant	Wining Party	Polling Percentage
2014	834082814	553020648	8251	BJP	66.30 %

Source: eci.nic.in<sup>216</sup>

The results of 2014 general election were significant in many aspects:

**Firstly**, it shows the biggest win by any single party since the 1984 election. The BJP won its largest share of votes and seats since its formation in 1980.

**Secondly**, it is the first time that non-congress party has achieved a majority in its own since 1977.

**Thirdly**, the congress slipped down to its lowest ever vote and seat share, with just 44 seats.

**Lastly**, the two main left parties- Communist Party of India Marxist (CPM) and Communist Party of India (CPI) continued to face electoral decline, and won just 10 seats in 2014 election compared to 20 in the 2009 and 53 in the 2004 general elections.

### **Modi wave**

In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the approach of BJP was unprecedented. For the first time the party was able to put together both upper caste and other backward classes along with the ST and SC in a social collation. The most important factor, which helped BJP in mobilizing voters, was the projection of Narendra Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate. In the election, Modi could mobilize people more in economic

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<sup>216</sup><http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html> [Accessed 20/12/17]

front compared to BJP's earlier ideological discourse. Modi's image as a market friendly pro-business leader helped the BJP to attract the people across all economic classes. Modi's appointment as the chief of BJP's campaign committee in June 2013 was a turning point in the electoral politics of the country in view 2014 Lok Sabha election. In almost all the pre-poll surveys, it was revealed that one-third of the total respondents preferred Narendra Modi as their future leader and Prime Minister compared to Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh combined.

To conclude, it can be argued that during more than six decades of electoral democracy in India has come a long way in its procedural form. However, on substantive front, it is still lagging behind, Because the identity-based mobilization, assertion of disadvantaged masses can also be deployed for wrong causes for example, the demolition of Babri Mosque or the violence for or against the Mandal commission report-based reservations.<sup>217</sup> With the introduction of the 'new economic policies', the nature of Indian democracy has changed to a great extent because market is exclusionary and it is coming in the way to inclusive politics of democracy. Somehow, Indian democracy has not done so well on socialistic and secularist fronts, because representation is not well enough. Indian elections have gradually become gigantic due to a large and geographically spread out electorates. In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the process involved 8000 candidates from 464 political parties with 834.1million electorates from 28 Indian states and & union territories.<sup>218</sup> The election between 7<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014 was conducted in 9 phases using 930,000 polling

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<sup>217</sup>Rajendra, Vora, and Paliskar, S. (eds) (2004). Indian Democracy: Meaning and Practices, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 28

<sup>218</sup>E, Sridharan. (2014). Class Voting in the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections, The Growing Size and Importance of the Middle Classes, *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 27, 2014 vol xlix no 72 39

stations and 1.7 million Electronic Voting Machines. This has been the longest and most expensive election in the electoral history of country. It is seen that use of ICT and EVMs made the entire process smooth and speedy for which results could be declared soon after the elections. The incorporation of the option of 'None of the Above' (NOTA) in the electronic ballot enabled the voters to show their apathy towards the political parties and candidates by casting their votes.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **HISTORY OF ELECTORAL POLITICS**

### **AND TREND OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

#### **IN ASSAM**

Assam occupies the most prominent position in India's Northeast. Apart from its strategic location, the State also occupies an important place in terms of its social economic and political activities. Assam annexed to the British dominion in 1826 and thereafter the history of Assam followed suit as the history of its nation India.<sup>219</sup>

While talking about the history of Assam, we may refer to a confluence of the people from the east, west and the north of India; and an amalgamation of the Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman cultures. Politically, it has been invaded, but has never served as a vassal or a colony to an external power until the advent of the Burmese in 1821 and subsequently by the British in 1826.<sup>220</sup> With the defeat of the Burmese in the First Anglo-Burmese war and later in the Treaty of Yandaboo, the control of Assam passed onto the hands of the British, which marked the end of the medieval era.<sup>221</sup>

### **3.1 British Annexation of Assam**

After the Burmese occupied the territory of Assam, the British began their campaign against the Burmese. In 1824, lower Assam (originally Koch Hajo) was formally

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<sup>219</sup>Barpujari, H. K. (1977). *Political history of Assam, Vol. I*. Guwahati: Publication Board Government of Assam. pp. 350-350

<sup>220</sup>Barpujari, H.k. p. 45

<sup>221</sup>Ibid. p. 65

annexed. The following year the British defeated the Burmese in the upper Assam region leading to the Treaty of Yandaboo.<sup>222</sup> In this war against the Burmese, the Ahoms did not support the British and hence in March 1828, lower Assam was formally annexed. In the same year, the Kachari kingdom was annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse after King Govinda Chandra was killed. In 1832, the Khasi king surrendered and the British extended their influence over the Jaintia ruler. Therefore, in 1833, upper Assam became a British protectorate under the erstwhile ruler of the Ahom kingdom, Purandhar Singha, but in 1838, the region was formally taken over by the British Empire. With the annexation of the Maran-Matak territory in the east in 1839, the annexation of Assam was complete.<sup>223</sup>

### **The Colonial rule under Bengal Presidency (1826–1873)**

The annexation of Assam resulted in its inclusion in the Bengal Presidency. The annexation of upper Assam was followed by the successful manufacture of tea in 1837, and the beginning of the Assam Company in 1839. Under the Wasteland Grant Rules of 1838,<sup>224</sup> it became nearly impossible for natives to start plantations. In addition, later after the liberalization of the rules in 1854, there was a land rush. The local labourers tended the Chinese staffs that were brought earlier for the cultivation of tea left Assam in 1843, and gradually tea plantations solely, mainly by those belonging to the Kachari group.<sup>225</sup> From 1859, onwards central Indian labour was imported for the tea plantations. These labourers were brought on an unbreakable contract, which virtually led them to slavery. The conditions in which they were

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<sup>222</sup>Maung, H. A, (1967). *A History of Burma*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press. p. 214–215.

<sup>223</sup>Choudhury, P. C. (1966), *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.* Guwahati: Dept. of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam.

<sup>224</sup>Borpujari, H.K., (1992). *A Comprehensive History of Assam Vol. III*, Guwahati: Publication Board of Assam

<sup>225</sup>Barpujari, H.K. p. 56

transported to Assam were so horrific that about 10% never survived the journey. The colonial government already had monopoly over the opium trade. There were immediate protests and revolts against the British occupation. In 1828, two years after the Treaty of Yandaboo, Gomdhar Konwar rose in revolt against the British, but he was easily suppressed. In 1830, Dhananjoy Burhagohain, Piyali and Jiuram Medhi rose in revolt, and they were sentenced to death. In the Indian rebellion of 1857, the people of Assam offered resistance in the form of non-cooperation, and Maniram Dewan and Piyali Baruah, popularly known as Piyali Phukan were executed for their roles. In 1861 peasants of Nagaon gathered at Phulaguri for a *raijmel*<sup>226</sup> (peoples' assembly) to protest against taxes on betel-nut and betel leaf (Paan). Lt. Singer, a British officer got into a fracas with the peasants who were killed, after which the protests were violently suppressed.

### **Chief Commissioner's Province (1874–1905)**

In 1874, the Assam region was separated from the Bengal Presidency, Sylhet was added to it, and hence its status was upgraded to a Chief Commissioner's Province. The capital of the state was at Shillong. However, there was uproar amongst the people of Sylhet regarding its inclusion in Assam. Assamese, which was replaced by Bengali as the official language in 1837, was reinstated alongside Bengali. In 1889, oil was discovered at Digboi giving rise to an oil industry. In this period, Nagaon witnessed starvation deaths, and there was a decrease in the indigenous population, which was more than adequately compensated by the immigrant labour. Colonialism was well entrenched, and the tea, oil and coal-mining industries enforced pressure on

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<sup>226</sup>**Raijmel:** *raij* (people), *mel* (meeting)) is a people's meeting in Assam, an old political and social institution that originated in medieval times. The word *raij* is derived from *rajya*, which was originally an administrative or a fiscal unit in some parts of medieval Assam. Since these meetings could encompass more than one village, they were politically more potent than the village panchayat.

the otherwise lagging agricultural sector.<sup>227</sup> The peasants, burdened under the opium monopoly and the usury by money lenders, rose in revolt. Numerous *raizmels* were held against paying the taxes. The protests culminated in a bayonet charge against the protesters at Patharu ghat in 1894.<sup>228</sup> At least 15 were killed and in the violent repression that was the aftermath of the protest, a huge number of villagers were tortured by the subsequent loss of their properties, which were seized or looted. Later on in 1903, the Assam Association was formed with Manik Chandra Baruah as its first secretary.<sup>229</sup>

### **Eastern Bengal and Assam under the Rule of Lt. Governor (1906–1912)**

Bengal was partitioned and East Bengal was added to the Chief Commissioner's Province. The new region, now ruled by a Lt. Governor, had its capital at Dhaka. This province had a 15-member legislative council in which Assam had two seats.<sup>230</sup> The members for these seats were recommended (not elected) by rotating groups of public bodies. The Partition of Bengal was strongly protested in Bengal, and the people of Assam were not happy either. The partition was finally annulled by a royal decree in 1911. The Swadeshi movement (1905–1908) from this period went largely unfelt in Assam, though it had a great impact on some, most notably Ambikagiri Raichoudhury.<sup>231</sup> In the beginning of 1905, peasants from East Bengal began to settle down in the riverine tracts (char) of the Brahmaputra valley encouraged by the colonial government to increase agricultural production. Between 1905 and 1921 the

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<sup>227</sup> Guha, A. (1991), *Medieval and Early Colonial Assam*. Calcutta: K P Bagchi, pp. 55-60

<sup>228</sup> Borah, D. J., (1999). *Peasant Revolt in Medieval Assam: A Study of the Moamaria Uprising, 1769-1806*. Guwahati: Prag Publications, 205-210

<sup>229</sup> Barpujari, H.K. p. 250

<sup>230</sup> Barpujari, H.K. (1977). *Political History of Assam Vol. I, 1826-1919*. Guwahati: Publication Division Government of Assam, pp. 255-260

<sup>231</sup> Barpujari, H.K. (1990). *Political History of Assam, Vol. II, 1826-1919*, Guwahati: Publication Division Government of Assam, 269-279



immigrant population from East Bengal increased four folds. The immigration continued in post-colonial period, giving rise to the Assam Agitation of 1979.<sup>232</sup>

### **The Act of 1909**

Expansion of the Provincial Legislative Councils was done by including non-official members, which included 41 members from Assam. However, the government was ultimately answerable to the British parliament, as the administrative power was not vested to the Government of India during that time.<sup>233</sup> Assam was under different heads at different times during British India. From 1826 to 1854, it was under the Governor General of India, then from 1854 to 1874 under the Lt. Governor of Bengal and under a Chief Commissioner from 1874 to 1905. From 1905 to 1912 it had been under the Lt. Governor of East Bengal and Assam but again from 1912 to 1921 it was put under the Chief Commissioner. Finally, from 1921 onwards it was put under a Governor.<sup>234</sup>

During the period 1874 to 1906, Assam was not represented in any Legislative Council, Central or provincial. A beginning was made in this direction in 1906 (Assam was then under the Lt. Governor of East Bengal and Assam) when Assam was represented by two members in the Eastern Bengal and Assam Legislative Council which consisted of 14 members. These two members were elected by local boards and municipal boards and thereafter nominated by the Governor-General in India with due recommendation from the Lt. Governor. Under the 1909 GOI Act, the strength of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Legislative Council was increased to forty and Assam was allotted five seats. Of these five seats, 3 were indirectly elected by the

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<sup>232</sup>Guha, A. (1977). *Planter Raj to Swaraj*. New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 168-199

<sup>233</sup>Bhuyan, Arun. (1978). *Political History of Assam Vol I & II*. Guwahati: Publication Division Government of Assam, pp. 60-78

<sup>234</sup>Bhuyan, Arun., p. 56

local and municipal boards, 1 by the tea industry and 1 by Muslims of the Surma Valley. In 1912, when Assam became a province under the Chief Commissioner, it was given a Legislative Council with strength of 24 members of which the Chief Commissioner nominated 13 and eleven were elected. The eleven elected seats were based on the following formula, 2 were elected by separate electorate consisting of Muslims, one each from each Valley, 2 by landlords, 4 by Municipal and Local Boards and 3 by Tea Industry. Of the 14 that were nominated, 1 represented the Ahom community, 1 railway workshops, 1 commerce, and 1 the Zaminders. The remaining 10 were the officials.

#### **Assam Legislative Council (1912–1920)**

The administrative unit was reverted to a Chief Commissioner's Province (Assam and Sylhet), and with a Legislative Council. The Council had 25 members of which the Chief Commissioner nominated 13 members formed the bulk. Local public bodies like municipalities, local boards, landholders, tea planters and Muslims, elected the other members.<sup>235</sup> As Assam got involved into the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Assam Association slowly transformed itself into the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (with 5 seats in AICC) in 1920-21.

#### **Dyarchy (1921–1937)**

Under the provision of Government of India Act 1919, an Indian legislature, consisting of a Council of State and a Central Legislative Assembly took over the legislative functions of the Governor-General's Council. The Governor-General nonetheless retained significant power over legislation. He could authorize the expenditure of money without the Legislature's consent for "ecclesiastical, political

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<sup>235</sup>Bannerje, A C (1992). "Chapter 1: The New Regime, 1826-31". Barpujari, H K. *The Comprehensive History of Assam: Modern Period IV*. Guwahati: Publication Board, Assam. p. 1–43.

and defence" purposes, and for any purpose during "emergencies."<sup>236</sup> He was permitted to veto or even stop debate on any bill. If he recommended the passage of a bill, but only one chamber co-operated, he could declare the bill passed over the objections of the other chamber. The Legislature had no authority over foreign affairs and defence. The Governor-General appointed the President of the Council of State; the Central Legislative Assembly was to elect its own President, apart from the first, but the election required the Governor-General's approval.<sup>237</sup> Under this Act, the Legislative Council of Assam was strengthened to 53 members. 41 of the seats were based on election and 12 on nomination. The seat (elected) break-up was based on the following principle:<sup>238</sup>

16 – Brahmaputra Valley 16 – Surma/ Barak Valley

These seats were further divided on the basis of representation along the following lines- I) Labour, Backward areas, ii) Non-Muslim Urban, iii) Non-Muslim Rural, iv) Muslim rural, v) Commerce and Industry. Out of which of the nominated seats, four were non-officials and based on the following division: Tribal (1), Muslim (1), Bengali Hindu (1) and Assamese Hindu (1).

### **Government of India Act 1935**

The Third Round Table Conference failed in the year 1934. The British Government decided to enact a new legislation and entrusted the task to a Joint Select Committee. Lord Linlithgow was appointed as the President of the Committee. The Committee finally completed the Drafting of the Bill in February 1935 and the Bill became an

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<sup>236</sup>Curtis, Lionel (1920). *Papers Relating to the Application of the Principle of Dyarchy to the Government of India*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, pp. 128-132

<sup>237</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 190

<sup>238</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 199

Act in July 1935 under the name Government of India Act 1935.<sup>239</sup> The Act envisaged for India -a federation with the existence of both provinces and States. The provisions of the Act establishing the federal central government were not to go into operation until a specified number of rulers of states had signed Instruments of Accession. Since, this did not happen, the central government continued to function in accordance with the 1919 Act and only the part of the 1935 Act dealing with the provincial governments, which went into operation.<sup>240</sup>

The Act introduced direct election for the first time. The right to vote was increased from seven million to thirty-five million. The Act also provided more elected Indian representatives in Provincial Assemblies who in turn could lead majorities and form government. Governors retained discretionary powers regarding summoning of legislatures, giving assent to bills and administering certain special regions (mostly tribal).<sup>241</sup> The Federal Legislature was to consist of two Houses, the Council of State (Upper House) and the Federal Assembly (Lower House). The Council of State had to include 260 members, out of which 156 were to be elected from the British India and 104 were to be nominated by the rulers of princely states. On the other hand, the Federal Assembly was to consist of 375 members; out of which 250 were to be elected by the Legislative Assemblies of the British Indian provinces while 125 were to be nominated by the rulers of princely states. The Central Legislature had the right to pass any bill, but the bill required the approval of the Governor General before it became Law. On the other hand, Governor General had the power to frame

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<sup>239</sup>Keay, J. (2000). *India: A History*. United States: Grove Press Publishers Group West.

<sup>240</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45

<sup>241</sup>Muldoon, A. (2016). *Empire, politics and the creation of the 1935 India Act*. UK: Routledge Publication.

ordinances. The Indian Council was abolished and in its place few advisers were nominated to help the Secretary of State for India.<sup>242</sup>

### **Constitution of Assam Legislative Assembly (1937–1947)**

Under the Government of India Act 1935, the Council was expanded into an Assembly of 108 members, with even more powers.<sup>243</sup> The period saw the sudden rise of leaders like Gopinath Bordoloi and Muhammed Saadulah and their tussle for power and influence.

## **3.2 Post-Independence Scenario**

India attained independence in 1947 and became a Republic in the year 1950. The Constitution provided a federal structure with Governments to look after the States and a more powerful government at Centre. Legislative systems comprise the Parliament at Centre with its Upper House (Rajya Sabha) and Lower House (Lok Sabha) and State Legislature, with State Legislative Assemblies (Bidhan Sabha) and in a few states the Upper House of the legislature – Bidhanb Parishad. Since, the Electoral system of the country has already been discussed elaborately in Chapter II; in this Chapter, a brief discussion on the General Elections to the State Legislative Assembly and to the Lok Sabha in Assam under the backdrop of corresponding social, political and economic situation in Assam is presented.

### **First General election in Assam 1952 – Administrative Arrangements**

After Independence, Assam made its presence felt for polling in the State Assembly for the first time in March 1952. Altogether 91 constituencies were demarcated and delineation of the Constituencies was done haphazardly. There were altogether 107

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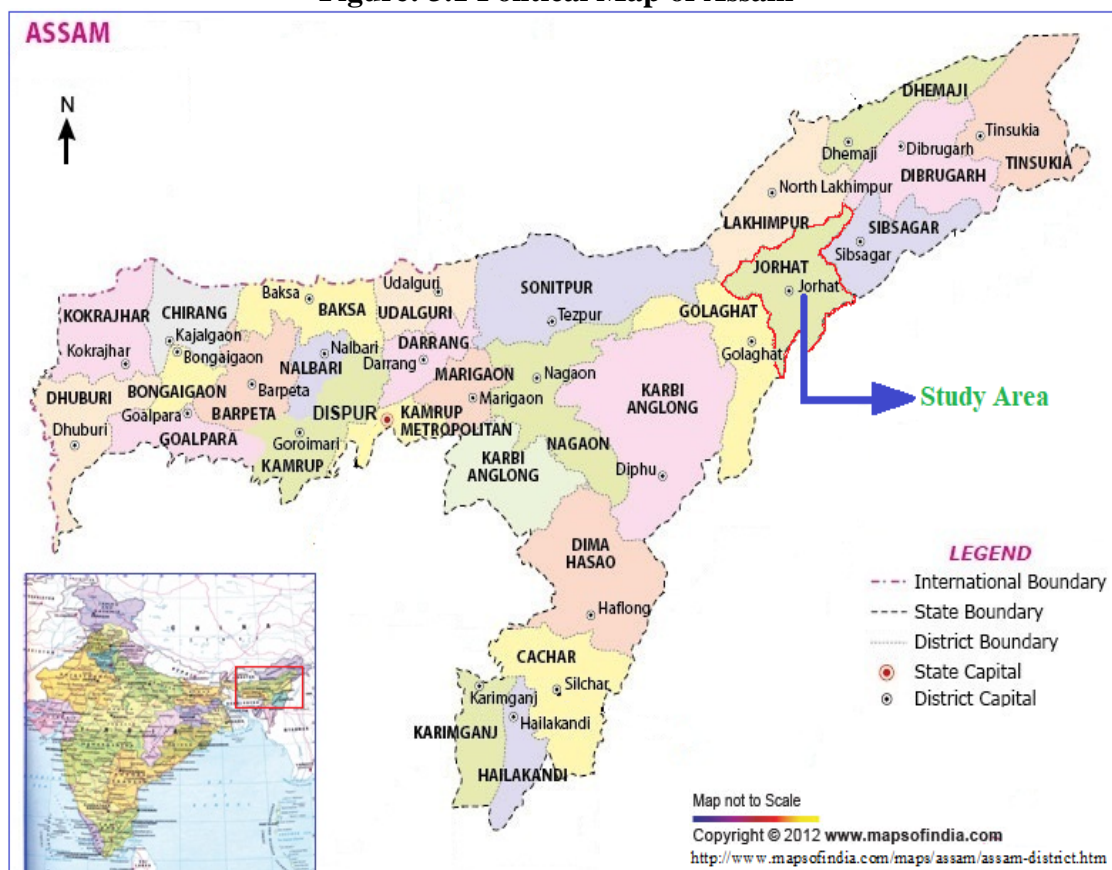
<sup>242</sup>Ibid., p. 180

<sup>243</sup>Barpujari, H.K., p.320

members to the First Legislative Assembly in Assam. Of the 91 constituencies, 81 were single member constituencies while 13 were double member constituencies. Thus, electorates were to elect as many as 107 members.

The following are some key features of first General election of Assam Legislative assembly.<sup>244</sup> There were three different types of constituencies in this election. They were General, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Constituencies. However, in case of Assam, there were 91 constituencies and all of them belonged to the general category.

**Figure: 3.1 Political Map of Assam**



Source: [www.mapsofindia.com/maps/assam/assam-district-htm](http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/assam/assam-district-htm)

<sup>244</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1952, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

### Presence of Double Member Constituencies

Presence of double member constituencies is one of the significant characteristics of the First election to the Assam State Legislative Assembly. This system continued until the Second State Assembly Elections but was finally discontinued since 1960s.

**Table 3.1: No. of Constituencies & Constituency Wise Contestants**

No. of contestants in a constituency	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-12	Above 13
No. of Such Constituencies	1	9	18	21	13	23	6	0

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam - 1952

The table 3.1 above shows that there were 6 constituencies where highest number of candidates i.e. 11-12 candidates contested followed by 6-10 candidates were from 23 constituencies. One candidate was elected unopposed while in nine constituencies there were direct contests between two candidates. However, there were no constituencies where more than 13 candidates contested.

**Table 3.2: Candidates Data, First General Election**

Items	Nos.
Total Contestants In Fray	458
Average Contestants Per Constituency	5
Minimum Contestants in a Constituency	1
Maximum Contestants in a Constituency	12

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1952

The above table 3.2 shows that there was a great enthusiasm among the people taking into account of the first general election to the legislative assembly in the State as the number contestants in fray was as many as 458 (Table 3.3). The fact that at an average of 5 candidates contested in each constituency itself is a significant fact especially

when people had no idea about the process. Political consciousness among the people was at its height, mainly because of the fact that the spirit of freedom movement till that time had not extinguished from the minds of the people.

**Table 3.3: First General Election to Legislative Assembly**

Sl. No	Items	Nos.
1	No of constituencies	91
2	Nominations filed	593
3	Nominations rejected	61
4	Nominations withdrawn	74
5	No of contesting Candidates	458
6	No of candidates who forfeited deposits	0

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1952

The above table- 3.3 gives the summary of the first general election to the Legislative Assembly in Assam.

It may be observed that at an average of more than six candidates initially filed nominations for contesting the election. Later, during the scrutiny stage, 61 nominations were rejected and 74 candidates withdrew nominations leaving 455 candidates in fray.

**Table 3.4: Electors in the First General Election Legislative Assembly**

Items	TOTAL
No of Electors	41,41,720
No. of electors who voted	26,47,127
Polling Percentage	47.96

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1952

In the following table -3.5 the names of the political parties who took part in the first General election is presented. It may be observed that almost all the prominent national parties took part in this election.



The left political parties like Bolshevik Party of India, Communist party of India and Forward Block also participated in the election. From the table it is clear that as against the nine national parties, there were the number of local parties who participated in the election was also not too small – which was 10.

**Table 3.5: List of Participating Political Parties**

Sl. No	Name of the party		
		11	Garo National Council
1	All India Bhartiya Jan Sangh	12	Khasi-Jaintia Durbar
2	Bolshevik Party of India	13	Khasi Jaintia National Federation State Conference
3	Communist Party Of India	14	Khasi-Jaintia Rural Organization
4	Forward Bloc (Ruikar Group)	15	Mizo Union
5	Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha	16	Scts
7	Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party		
8	Revolutionary Socialist Party		
9	Socialist Party		
10	All Peoples Party		

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1952

**Table 3.6: Constituencies and Electors in the First General Election to Assam Legislative Assembly**

	Type of constituencies	Gen	SC	ST	Total
No of constituencies	Single member	81	0	0	81
	Double member	13	0	0	13
	Total	94	0	0	94
Electors	Single member	3133224	NA	NA	3133224
	Double member	1008784	NA	NA	1008784
	Total	4142008	NA	NA	4142008
Electors who voted	Single member	1547434	NA	NA	1547434
	Double member	901456	NA	NA	901456
	Total	2448890	NA	NA	2448890

Note: NA = Data not available.

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1952

Table- 3.6 shows the breakup of the number of constituencies, no of electors and the people who voted according to caste constituencies. It may be observed that there were no caste-tribe wise identified constituencies during the first general election.

Number of single member constituency was more than six times than that of the double member constituencies, yet the in terms of the voters, it was only around 3 times while in terms of the voters who cast vote it was not even lesser.

**Table 3.7: Party Performance in the First General Election to the Assembly in Assam**

Sl.No	National parties	Contested	Won	%
3	CPI	18	1	2.84%
6	INC	92	76	43.48%
7	KMPP	40	1	5.99%
9	SP	61	4	13.30%
	<b>Total I</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>66.43%</b>
10	APP	3	1	0.61%
11	GNC	4	3	0.60%
12	KJD	4	1	0.99%
13	KJFSC	1	1	0.39%
15	MU	3	3	1.19%
	<b>Total II</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>05.34%</b>
20.	<b>III. Independent</b>	213	14	28.34%
	<b>Grand Total=I+II+III</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1952

In the above table - 3.7 reveals the situation where the participating political parties stand after the election. Of all the political parties, the performance of India National Congress was the foremost and that was inevitable because the memories of the freedom movement were quite fresh in the minds of the people. The double member constituencies were a unique experience for the people, as they had to offer their two choices in the same constituencies. However, the double member constituencies were eliminated after the 1956 election and replaced by all single member constituencies.

### **3.3 Assam and Lok Sabha Elections**

The First Lok Sabha Election in Assam was held in 1951. There were only 10 seats from the state in this election. Out of these 9 seats were won by Indian National Congress while only 1 seat was won by Swamajbadi Party

The second Lok Sabha election in Assam was held in March 1957 with total electorates of 4495359. This election was held for 12 constituencies with a polling percentage of 46.14 percentages. In this election, INC contested in 12 constituencies won 9 seats with a vote share of 51.68 percentage. PSP contested in seven seats secure two seats with a vote share of 19.96 percentage. Independents who contested in nine seats won one seat with a vote share of 18.11 percentages.<sup>245</sup>

#### **Lok Sabha Election 1962**

The third Lok Sabha election in Assam was held in the month of February 1962 along with rest of the country with total electorates of 4942860. In this election, Congress contested in 12 seats and secured nine seats with a vote share of 45.16 percentages. PSP, which contested in eight constituencies, could return in two with a vote share of 19.16 percentages, HLC that contested only in one seats won the same with a vote share of 3.68 percentages.<sup>246</sup>

#### **Lok Sabha Election 1967**

The fourth Lok Sabha election in Assam was held in February 1967 with a total number of 5741959 electorates. This time the number of constituencies increased to 14 in Assam and INC put up its candidates in all the seats and was successful to

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<sup>245</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1957, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>246</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1962, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

secure 10 seats with vote share of 45.84 percentages. PSP won in two seats out of four candidates with a vote share 12.80 percentage. CPI, which contested in four constituencies, could return in one with a vote share of 8.27 percentages, AHL contested with one seat and could win it with a vote share of 3.77 percentages.<sup>247</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1971**

The fifth General Election was held in March 1971, for 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam with a total number of 6268273 electorates. In this election, Congress secured 13 seats with a vote's share of 56.98 percentages and AHL won a seat with a vote share of 3.00 percentages.<sup>248</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1977**

The sixth General Election for Lok Sabha in Assam was held in Assam in March 1977 for four constituencies with 7225616 numbers of electorates. In this election, INC won with 10 seats with a vote share of 50.56 percentages. Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), contested in 11 constituencies and won three seats with a vote share of 35.27 percentage, one independent candidate return in this election.<sup>249</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1980**

Elections for seventh Lok Sabha were conducted in Assam in January 1980 for 2 constituencies with a 1209486 number of electorates. It was midterm poll because

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<sup>247</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1967, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>248</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1971, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>249</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1977, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

sixth Lok Sabha remained in power only for 2 years and 5 months. In this election Congress, secured two seats with a vote share 51.01 percentage.<sup>250</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1985**

The Eighth election for Lok Sabha was held in Assam in 1985 along with the state assembly election for 14 constituencies. Assam had 10097661 electorates. In this election INC (I) contested in 13 constituencies and won only there with a vote share of 23.43 percentage. PTC, which contested with three seats, returned in one with a vote share of 4.15 percentages. ICS contested in eighth constituencies could return in one with 6.13 percentage of vote share. There were as many as 64 independent candidates, who were supported by the newly formed regional party AGP. The independent eight candidates were returned with a vote share of 56.93 percentages. The total polling percentage in this election was 74.40 percentages.<sup>251</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1991**

Tenth general election for Lok Sabha in Assam was held in the month of June 1991 for 14 constituencies with a total number of electorates of 11873952. In this election, INC put up its candidates for 14 constituencies and secured eight seats with a vote share of 28.49 percentage. BJP remain in the second position wining two seats out of its 8 candidates with a vote share of 9.60 percentage. CPM, which contested in two seats, secured one with a vote share of 4.23 percentages, regional political party of

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<sup>250</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1980, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>251</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1985, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

Assam AGP and ASDC could secure one seat with a vote share of 17.62 and 1.65 percentages respectively.<sup>252</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1996**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections were held in Assam in March 1996 with electorates of 12587659. In this election, INC could secure five seats out of 14 candidates came out victorious with a vote share 31.64 percentage. The regional party of AGP contested in 11 constituencies and won 5 seats with a vote share of 27.17 percentage whereas BJP out of its 14 candidates could remain in only one seat and with a vote share of 15.92 percentage. In this election, one out of 65 independent candidates returned with a vote share of 11.71 percentage of vote share. The general voting percentage in Assam was 61.06 percentage. The 11<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha therefore remained only for 1 year and 6 months and the by-election was held in March 1998 for 12<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha.<sup>253</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 1998**

In 1998, the Lok Sabha election in Assam was held with a 14277806 number of electorates. Out of total number 13 candidates, Congress (I) won in 10 seats with a vote share of 38.97 percentages. In this election, UMFA put up one candidate and won the seat with a vote share of 4.27 percentages. Regional; party ASDC won one seat with a vote share of 2.20 percentage and out of 45 independent candidates only one-candidate returned with a vote share of 9.51 percentage.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1991, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>253</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1996, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>254</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election (By-Election) 1998, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

12<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, which was constituted on 10 March 1998, could last for only 1 year and 1 month and subsequently the 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election was held in October 1990. This election had a total number of 14290673 electorates in Assam. This election had a total voter's turnout of 71.26 percentages. In this election, INC contested in 14 constituencies and came out victorious in 10 seats with 38.42 percentage of vote share. BJP fought in 12 constituencies and could secure two seats with 28.89 percentage of vote share. CPI (ML) won one seat with a vote share of 2.25 percentages and out of 44 independent candidates, only one candidate returned with a vote share of 9.36 percentages.<sup>255</sup>

#### **Lok Sabha Election 2004**

In Assam, the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election was held in May 2004 with total electorates of 15014874 and had a voting percentage of 69.11 percentages. Congress contested in fourteen constituencies from Assam and could secure nine seats with a percentage of 35.07 percentage votes. BJP contested in 12 seats and could secure only two seats with a vote share of 22.94. AGP had its candidates in 12 constituencies and it returned in two seats with a vote share of 19.95 percentages. Independent secured one set out of 47 candidates with a vote share of 13.41 percentages.<sup>256</sup>

#### **Lok Sabha Election 2009**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election was held in May 2009 in Assam with 17470239 electorates in 14 constituencies. In the election INC won majority of seats with a vote share of 34.69 followed by BJP, which secured four seats with a vote share of 16.62

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<sup>255</sup>Lok Sabha., By Election, 1998. p. 45(URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>256</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 2004, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

percentages, AGP could win in one each by a vote share of 14.6 percentage and AIUDF won one seat with a total vote share of 16.1 percentages.<sup>257</sup>

### **Lok Sabha Election 2014**

Elections for 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha session were held in the state of Assam in May 2014 with a total number of 18837713 electorates. This, election had a highest ever voters turn out with about 80.12 percentage which was much higher than the national average. In this election, significantly BJP won in seven seats with a vote share of 36.5 percentages. However, INC could win only three seats with a vote share of 29.6 percentages. On the other hand, AIUDF could manage to win in three constituencies with a vote share of 14.8 percentage in this election.<sup>258</sup>

There was steady growth in number of electorates starting from 1951 to 1977 election with average turn out of around 50percentages. In 1980 election in Assam for Lok Sabha there was a significant decline in electorates, which had the lowest ever voter's turnout of 44.68 percentage. In 1985 election again there was a spectacular increase in total number of electorates, which crossed the margin of one crore.

Subsequently the voters turn out also increased up to 77.40 percentages in Lok Sabha election. After 1985, there was an abnormal growth in number of electorates in the state of Assam. During two decades' time the number of electorates becomes almost

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<sup>257</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 2009, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>258</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 2014, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]



double in 2004. There was a significant rise and fall in voters turn out after the 1995 election but on one occasion, it was more than 61 percentages.<sup>259</sup>

From the first general election for Lok Sabha in Assam, Indian national Congress was the dominant party by winning majority seats. However, since 1985 a new trend was started in the electoral politics in Assam for the first time because INC was reduced to 4 seats. This election was mainly dominated by newly formed regional party Asom Ganna Parisad (AGP) supported by independent candidates, which could manage to win eight seats with remarkable percentage of vote share.

However, in the 1991 Lok Sabha election Congress party could regain its dominance by wining on average more than, 8 seats up to 2009 Lok Sabha election with on an average 30 percentage of total vote share. In the national and state level politics in 2014 Lok Sabha elections again INC was pushed back and reduced to three seats like the earlier 1985 election. There was also a growth of party candidates and independents contesting in the election expert 1980 election in the state.<sup>260</sup>

### **3.4 Assembly Elections in Assam: An Analysis**

In the beginning of this chapter an analysis of the first general election to Assam assembly has been given. The trend and style of electoral politics in Assam since the first general election in 1952, to the election in the 1970s was more or less a reflection of all Indian politics. In this election, participation of the people was limited to around 50 percentages and Indian National Congress (INC) was the only dominant National

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<sup>259</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1995, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>260</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Lok Sabha Election 1980, 1985, 2009, 2011, 2014, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

party. However, towards the end of 1970s, the political environment started changing due to many socio political factors.

There was a growth in electorates of the state and it was believed that the growth was not normal. There was an unusual growth in the number of voters. The reason behind was the rampant immigration of foreign national to the state. In 1979, the All Assam Students Union started a mass agitation against this immigration of foreigners.

Assam Gana Sangram Parisad, Assam Karmachari Parisad and many others civic organization supported the agitation. This was the turning point of socio-political history of Assam with the culmination of agitation by signing “Assam Accord” in 1985, between the Government of India and ASSU along with associated organization.

The Assam Accord mandates for detection, deletion and deportation for all foreigners national who came in to Assam on and after 25March 1971. After the six yearlong agitations, an election was held for state assembly in 1983, which was boycotted by many organizations. The agitators considered that election was an illegal one without deleting the names of foreigner from electoral roles.<sup>261</sup>

The polling percentage in this election was lowest in the election history of Assam, which was 32.74 per cent. Soon after the election, president rule was imposed in Assam and then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi invited the leaders of the agitation for a peace talk.

After signing the Assam accord all the leaders associated with the agitation convened, a convention, which was held in Golaghat for formation of a new regional

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<sup>261</sup>S. Goswami, ‘Assam: Multiple Realignments and Fragmentation’, Journal of Indian School of Political Economy 15(1-2), January and June 2003.

party, came into existence in 14 October 1985. Consequently, a new party emerged in the politics of Assam in the name of AGP.

People voted in favour of the party with a polling percentage of 79.2 percentages. For the first, time a regional political party came to power with majority seat of 126-assemblyconstituency. Since 1985, the politics of Assam had been changing in as significant way in terms of election participation, socio political issues etc.<sup>262</sup>

**Table: -3.8 Gender wise Polling Percentage in Assembly Election**

Year	Men	Women	Polling Percentage
1956	N/A*	N/A	45.44%
1962	15.89%	09.34%	51.05%
1967	20.38%	13.31%	51.05%
1972	22.51%	16.00%	60.85%
1978	30.97%	22.34%	66.86%
1983	13.94%	09.91%	32.74%
1985	42.35%	35.93%	79.21%
1992	48.02%	40.78%	74.67%
1996	51.19%	44.45%	78.92%
2001	58.35%	50.02%	75.05%
2006	68.81%	63.19%	75.77%
2011	74.94%	76.85%	75.92%
2016	84.33%	84.67%	84.49%

\*N/A = Not Available

Source: Compiled Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1956-2016

It is seen that there has been a gradual rise in the political participation in terms of casting of votes since 1956. However, there was a big fall in the percentage in the year 1983 mainly because of the resistance imposed by the agitators. In that year, polling could not be conducted in 17 constituencies. However, the House was dissolved in the year 1985 after the signing of Assam Accord and the next election was declared in the same.

<sup>262</sup>S. Goswami, 'Peace and Development', Economic and Political Weekly, 4 June 2011.

People participated in large number in the 1985 election and so far the highest numbers of voters participated in that election i.e. 79.21 percentage of the total voters. Since 1985, polling percentage maintained a steady trend and remained at the level of 70percentages which is a good sign for democracy.<sup>263</sup>

In the following table shows numbers of contestants in each general election since 1956.

**Table 3.9: Total Contestants in Assembly Elections**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total Candidates</b>
1956	305	6	312
1962	405	4	409
1967	486	6	492
1972	510	12	522
1978	916	22	938
1983	472	3	475
1985	1104	29	1133
1992	1607	50	1657
1996	1012	17	1029
2001	861	55	916
2006	927	70	977
2011	896	112	981
2016	973	118	1064

Source: Election Commission of India, Compiled Statistical Report  
Assembly Election in Assam -1956-2016

From the above 3.18 though no definite trend can be observed as regard the number of candidates in each successive election, yet it can be said that people overwhelm participated in the general elections. Number of candidates was few in 1983 election due to the reasons already stated and in 1992, it was all time high may be due to the reason that people were under President's rule for about two and half years with

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<sup>263</sup>Goswami, S. (2001). Changing Electoral Trends. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(19), 1584-1586

hectic anti insurgency operations by Indian Army. The situation was calm and people were eagerly waiting to return to the democratic process.<sup>264</sup>

### 3.10: Growth of Electorates in Assam Assembly Election

Year	Total Electorates/Voters	Year	Total Electorates/ Voters
1952	4929004	1985	9883304
1957	5368131	1991	11892068
1962	4742816	1996	12585712
1967	5585056	2001	14426221
1972	6296198	2006	17434019
1978	7974395	2011	18188269
1983	8655056	2016	19990755

Source: Compiled Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1956-201

**Table 3.11: Voter's Turnout in the Assembly Elections in Assam, 1952-2016**

Year of Election	Total votes polled	Valid Votes Polled	Polled Percentages
1952	2504179	2448890	50.00%
1957	2560704	2523970	47.7%
1962	2608483	2444161	55.0%
1967	3369249	3107184	60.3%
1972	3849821	3713700	61.8%
1978	5331402	5165252	66.8%
1983	2830203	2767939	32.7%
<b>1985</b>	<b>7769233</b>	<b>7362797</b>	<b>79.21%</b>
1991	8801776	8287489	74.0%
1996	9564434	9092800	76.0%
2001	9821305	9526145	68.0%
2006	13209887	13199969	75.77%
2011	13809440	13820576	75.92%
2016	16891142	16730279	84.49%

Source: Compiled Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1956-2001

<sup>264</sup>S, Goswami., (2011) 1584-1586

In the following table shows, here is the number of women participants in the general elections under consideration and their performance.

**Table 3.12: Women Contestants in Assembly Elections**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Women Candidates</b>	<b>Won</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Women Candidates</b>	<b>Won</b>
1956	6	5	1992	50	5
1962	4	4	1996	17	6
1967	6	4	2001	55	10
1972	12	0	2006	70	13
1978	22	1	2011	85	14
1983	3	2	2016	91	8
1985	29	5			

Source: Election Commission of India, Compiled Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam - 1956-2016

It is observed that in general women's participation kept on rising although no definite trend could be observed. However, a growing trend could be visualized with an exception in the years 1983 and 1996. Similarly, winning numbers in actual terms kept on increasing since 1972 from zero to 13. However, in terms of percentage it was in the year 1962 when the score reached 100.

Electoral politics in Assam has a great bearing in the policies of Congress. In fact, in the upper Assam people still follow the leaders of the freedom movement who were mainly from Congress party. With an occasional break in 1985 and 1996, it was the Indian National Congress, which ruled the State politics. The INC was in power for three consecutive term in spite of all allegations from mis- governance charged against it proves how influential the party was in the Assam politics.

### **3.5 Phases of Electoral Politics in Assam**

#### **First phase (1952-83): Congress Dominance**

##### **Assam Assembly Election 1952**

The trends of first five legislative elections in Assam were more or less similar. In the first election held in 1952, Congress party won 79.56 per cent of seats by a vote share of 44 percentages. The Socialist Party and Kisan Mazdur Party (KMPP) together filled 103 candidates in 1952 but the vote share was limited to 19 percentages and they won only 5 seats. In this election, most of the prominent freedom fighters of the state became the candidates and won the election. It is interesting to see that independent candidates secured around 14 percentages of Assembly seats. It is because of the fact that either most of the Assamese voters did not have any knowledge of the parties in election or about their agenda that is why these people did not have any party affiliation and voted independent candidates.<sup>265</sup>

##### **Assam Assembly Election 1957**

In 1957 election, the voters started gaining maturity in terms of understanding and better judgment on political issue compared to the first general election. In this election, Congress won 77.42 percentage of total seats against their strong opposition. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and Communist Party of India (CPI) with their strong hold secured only 13.78 per cent and 9.41 votes polled respectively. It was an easy win for Congress Party on the issue of formation of state on the linguistic basis. Parties other than Congress could enter into an alliance known as United Opposing Block in the elections from 1952 to 1957.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>265</sup>S. Goswami, Assam: Multiple Realignments and Fragmentation of Party System, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jan-June – 2003.

<sup>266</sup>S. Goswami., 2003

### **Assam Assembly Election 1962**

In 1962, the third general election was held for state assembly in Assam. In this election more political parties came into existence. Apart from Congress, there were PSP, CPI, Socialist Party (SP), Bharatiya Jana Sangha (BJS), All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) and Revolutionary Congress Party (CPI) in India. In this election, INC gained 48.25 percentages of total votes cast and secured 83.87 percentages of assembly seats.

In this election, numbers of candidates were returned uncontested. The factors like demand for separate hill state, immigration, language and economic issue influenced this election. There was direct contest between the Congress and APHLC (All Party Hill Leaders Conference) in all the 15 legislative assembly constituency of hill district of Assam. In this election, APHLC won seats on the issue of the separate hill state and support base in hill areas of the state. In this election, many political parties entered into electoral understanding with independent candidates.<sup>267</sup>

### **Assam Assembly Election 1967**

In 1967, eight political parties contested election in Assam. Besides a number of independent candidates, the political parties were INC, Satrantra Party, Bharatiya Jana Sangha, CPI, Praja Socialist Party, All party Hill Leaders Conference. In this election, the pattern of vote and seats sharing among the parties and candidates changed to a large extent. INC secured 61.26 percentages of assembly seats compared to 77.425 percentages in 1957 and 83.87 percentages in 1962 election. In this way, the monopoly of Congress Party in power politics of the state declined. In this election

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<sup>267</sup>S, Goswami. Assam changing electoral trends, *Economic and Political Weekly*, May- 2001



Congress ally was limited to 72 seats and opposition captured 52 seats, which was only 26 in 1962 election.<sup>268</sup>

**Table 3.13: Seats Won by the Different Groups in Assembly Elections from 1952-1983**

Name of the Political Groups	1952	1957	1962	1967	1972	1978	1983
1. Congress	76	71	79	72	95	34	93
2. Communist	1	5	0	7	3	20	3
3. Non-Congress & Non-Communist	8	9	1	11	5	53	0
4. Regional	6	10	14	7	1	4	3
5. Independents	14	13	8	25	10	15	10
Total	105	108	102	122	114	126	109

Source: Report on the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Assembly Elections to the Assam legislative Assembly, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1978 and 1983 Election Department, Assam

For the first time a large number of independent candidates were elected in this election. The major issues before this election were demand for hill state, separation of Mizo district, location of newly proposed capital, industrialization and demand of separation of Cachar from Assam. In this election, 30 to 45percentages voters casted their votes based on racial caste and community issues. On the other hand, the Muslim voters who constituted 40 percentage of total population of the state voted for congress in block. In the elections of 1962-78, the Bharatiya Jana Sangha was eliminated. In 1967, the election results were a reflection of different issues like separation of Cachar, demand for independent Mizoram, Border dispute with East Pakistan (Present Bangladesh) along with the problem of unemployment and

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<sup>268</sup>Das, J. (2005). Assam: The Post-Colonial Political Developments. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 66(4), 873-900

immigration. After 1967 a new political party in the name of Democratic Party was formed in 1969.<sup>269</sup>

### **Assam Assembly Election 1972**

Fifth general election to Assam legislative assembly was held in 1972. In this election 9 political parties along with a large number of independent candidates contested. The political parties were INC (Requisitions), INC (O), SP and Communist Party of India, BJS, Satantra Party, Forward Block and Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA). Fifth general election of state of Assam indicated four different trends compared to earlier elections. The newly formed party under the leadership of India Gandhi received unprecedented support in the election. It secured 95 seats out of 114 seats. In this way, the position of the party was strengthening largely. The socialist party secured four seats; CPI won three seats, regional parties secured only one seat.<sup>270</sup>

The independents showed a poor performance in this election by obtaining 10 seats compared to the earlier election. In this election, the new Congress party incorporated many important issues and promises. The party through its manifesto showed its inclination to socialist politics in terms of democratic means, secularization, safeguards of the minority communities, creation of the minority communities, creation of employment for the youths, improvement of communication, establishment of industries, enactment of land reforms, change in education policy, integration of different religious group etc. The main propaganda in this election for Congress was “Garibi Hatao” (Remove Poverty) which influenced common voters largely. On the other hand, opposition fought the election with the slogan of “Indira

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<sup>269</sup>Hussain, M. (2003). Governance and Electoral Processes in India's North-East, Economic and Political Weekly, 38(10), 981-990.

<sup>270</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election 1972, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India.

Hatao” (Remove Indira), Socialist Party made election promises to nationalize all tea and oil companies to open opportunities for employment of local people. This party with such promise could secure only four seats in the election. The CPI fought 1972 election on the issue of unemployment, price control, and reform etc. could manage to get only three seats. Satanttra Party and PTCA secured only one seat each.

Sarat Sinha who was elected from Bilashipara East Constituency for several times was made interim Chief Minister of the state in 1972 and subsequently became an elected Chief Minister and served till 1978. He also served the Congress Party in various positions and capacities like general secretary, vice-president and president. However, he later joined Indian National Congress (Socialist) after the emergency era which was imposed by Indira Gandhi. He became the national president of Congress(S) in 1987. He was known for his simplicity and administrative ability.

Sinha faced some of the significant challenges during his tenure of Chief Minister-ship like shifting of the state capital from Shillong to Dispur when Meghalaya was carved out of Assam along with Shillong and the language agitation in 1972 which rocked the state, demanding introduction of Assamese language as the sole medium of instruction in Assam.<sup>271</sup>

### **Assam Assembly Election 1978**

Many political parties including INC, INC(I), Janata Party, CPI, Communist Party of India (M), Revolutionary CPI, PTC, SUCI, RSP, AIFB contested in the 1978 assembly election in Assam. All Indian Gorkha League (AIGL) along with independent candidates took part in the election. The Janata party, which came to

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<sup>271</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarat\\_Chandra\\_Sinha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarat_Chandra_Sinha) [Accessed 20/12/17]

power in the Lok Sabha election in 1977 tried to strengthen its position in the state of Assam.

The sixth assembly election was significant from many aspects - More than 938 candidates contested the election in 126 constituencies. Congress party, Congress (I) and the Janata Party were the main political forces in this election. Two political parties, the Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) and Purbanchaliya Loka Parisad (PLP) contested in many constituencies. In this election, participation of voters increased up to 66.86 percentages. The INC, which had 95 seats in the last election, could only secure 26 seats. Janata Party became the single largest party by winning 63 seats and its ally PTCA won four seats. The INC (I) could win only eight seats out of its 105 candidates. Significantly, left parties CPI (M) and CPI and RCPI had remarkable victory by winning 20seats together in this election. In this election, SUCI won two seats and PTCA secured four seats.

The number of returned independent candidates was 13. The major issues before this election were to provide more power to the state, election reforms, administrative reforms, price hike etc. The parties gave more importance to the issues related to women, working employees, youth and backward section of the society. This election gave a moving reaction to internal emergency declared by the Prime Minister; Indira Gandhi on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1974. The parties other than Congress vehemently criticized the anticipatory acts of the government during the emergency. Janata Party and left parties incorporated the issue in their election manifesto. The issue like opinion of the citizen rights and duties over centralizing the Indian federal structure were influential in the 1978 election.

### **Assam Assembly Election 1983**

The 1983, election for state legislative assembly in Assam was different from all the elections held so far. This period witnessed the rise and fall of four chief ministers, namely, Jogendra Nath Hazarika from 9 Sept 1979 to December 11, 1979 for only 93 days, Anwara Taimur from December 6, 1980 to June 30, 1981, Kesab Chandra Gogoi from 13 Jan 1982 to March 19 1982 and Hiteswar Saikia from February 27, 1983 to December 23, 1985. In between January 1983 President's rule was proclaimed for the third time. During this period an unprecedented socio, economic and political development took place in Assam and there was a six years long agitation against foreign national from 1979 to 1985.<sup>272</sup> Under these circumstances, the assembly election was declared in the month of February 1983. This election was boycotted by the organization associated with the movement. Only INC(I), INC(S) and left parties contested the election. The polling percentage was lowest ever 32.74 percentage in the election history of the state. Entire election was conducted with the deployment of armed forces. Unprecedented incidents took place during the elections, number of people died because of police firing and lathi charge. The elections took on a different turn as a massacre occurred in a place called Nellie in Nagaon district, around 3000 people died in this massacre. This election was held based on same electoral roll, which was used in 1978 election.<sup>273</sup>

In 29 assembly constituencies only 1 to 10 percentage, where 30 percentage of the total constituencies came successful and below 20 percentage of voters in 44 of total constituencies could cast their votes. The entire state and almost whole of the

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<sup>272</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1983, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>273</sup>Keya, D, and Guha, A. (1985). 1983 Assembly Poll in Assam: An Analysis of Its Background and Implications. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 20(19), 843-853.

Brahmaputra Valley was involved in the movement. The organizations involved in the movement-organized poll boycott, which had a great impact in Brahmaputra Valley. However, there was less impact of call for poll in plain areas of Barak valley and other areas where religious minority groups were predominant. Congress came out as the single largest party in the 1983 election securing 91 seats out of 110 assembly constituencies where elections were held. The government was formed with Hiteswar Saikia as the Chief Minister who later showed keen interest to make negotiation with the agitating organization and handle the foreigner issue.

### **Assam Assembly Election 1985 – Emergence of Regional Politics**

The 1985 election was a turning point in the politics of Assam. From 1979 to 1985 was a period of socio-economic and political unrest in Assam. A movement was started by AASU against immigration of foreigner from the neighbouring countries popularly known as “Assam Agitation”. Many other organisation also associated with this agitation. The agitation was primarily based on non-violent methods but in due course of the agitation, many violent incidents took place leading to considerable loss of life’s and property. The entire agitation was culminated to an Accord signed between the leaders of the movement and the representatives of Central Government. The accord known as Assam Accord was signed to dismiss the erstwhile Government of Assam and to make announcement of election immediately. In this accord, many clauses were incorporated to safeguard the social cultural identity of indigenous people. One of the major clauses of this accord was made for detection, deletion and

deportation of foreign national who had immigrated to the state on or before 25<sup>th</sup> March 1971.<sup>274</sup>

**Table 3.14: Winning Political Party Performance Assembly Election in 1985**

Name of the Party	Seat Contested	Seats won	Percentage of Votes Secured
AGP	105	63	34.54%
INC	125	25	23.47%
IC(S)	73	4	3.20%
CPI(M)	38	2	4.34%
UMFA	56	17	10.85%
PTC A	27	3	3.64%
UTNLF	15	1	2.10%
BJP	12	1	0.07%
Independents	650	10	16.22%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam 1985

This accord had multiple impacts on the political history of Assam. Firstly, a regional party was formed by the leaders of the movement in the style and came to be known as Asom Gana Parisad (AGP) after this accord. Secondly, awareness and understanding of the people about social, economic and political issues increased largely. Another important development that took place in this period was the emergence of extremist groups mainly United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). The ULFA has been demanding for an independent and sovereign Assam to resolve socio-political and economic problems of the region. Under these circumstances, election for state legislative assembly was held in December 1985.<sup>275</sup> In this election, nine political parties participated along with a large number of independent candidates

<sup>274</sup>Misra, U. (1999). Immigration and Identity Transformation in Assam, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(21), 1264-1271.

<sup>275</sup>Goswami, S. (2001). Changing Electoral Trends. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(19), 1584-1586

supported by AGP. Another remarkable aspect of this election was the unprecedented voters turn out which was 79 percentages. This was the reflection of the clear democratic will of the people in favour of the newly formed regional party. The national parties particularly INC who dominated the election result with big majority in the last five General elections in the state was pushed to the second position in 1985 assembly election.

The Janata Party, which could obtain the first ranking political party in the 1978 election, was eliminated in 1985. On the other hand, AGP the newly formed regional party just before the election whose candidates contested as independents occupied the first position in the election result. The emergence of AGP as a regional party in 1985 was a significant event not only for the politics of the state of Assam but also for the whole of Northeast India. In the 1985 election, AGP contested with 105 seats and won 63 seats with a 34.54 percentage of vote share. Another major development that took place in this election was rise of Unite Minority Front of Assam (UMFA), which was a party of religious minority group. UMFA contested in 56 seats and won only 1 seat with a vote share of 10.85 percentage remaining in the third position with a footing particularly of religious minority Muslim dominated areas.<sup>276</sup>

The growth of AGP and UMFA was significant as a regional political forces. During the foreigner movement, the leaders and supporters felt the need of a regional party capable of handling the sentiments and meeting the aspiration of Assamese middle class in the state. Although two regional parties Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) and Purbanchaliya Loka Parisad were already there yet they failed to work united for cross section of Assamese society due to their differences in policies. AASU made an

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<sup>276</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1983, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India.



effort for unification of regional forces which paved the way for holding of the National Political Convention (NPC) at Golaghat on 12 to 14 October in 1985. In this convention both AJD and PLP agreed to join in the proposed political party despite of their reservation and differences. The newly formed regional party came into existence on 14 October 1985 in the name of Asom Gana Parisad (AGP). The main objective of the party was to work for a free progressive society based on secular democratic socialism. In the convention, AGP resolved for more power to the state under a true federal structure. Another important resolution that was adopted in the convention was the economic security and cultural identity of cross section of Assamese people in the state.<sup>277</sup>

It is very important to see that why majority of the people of Assam voted for AGP or the UMFA.<sup>278</sup>

**Firstly**, majority voted AGP as it had made promises to detect and deport immigrants as per the terms of Assam Accord.

**Secondly**, the party assured to safeguard the linguistic and cultural identity of Assamese people, which was being increasingly challenged by the rampant immigration of foreigners.

**Thirdly**, it assured people on greater autonomy to the state by removing Stepmother tramping by the centre.

The Assam Accord, which was signed after a long-time agitation, divided the people of Assam in two groups- the majority which supported the accord under the leadership of AGP were on one side and the other side consisted of minority

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<sup>277</sup>Talukdar, Bhupendra. (2004). Electoral Politics and voting Behaviour in Assam Legislative Assembly Elections, 1952 – 2001, Unpublished Thesis, University of Gauhati

<sup>278</sup>Das, J. (2005). Assam: The Post-Colonial Political Developments. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 66(4), 873-900

especially Muslims. This had made the politics of Assam polarized in two lines, which was not so clear in the earlier phase. These two groups identified as pro and anti-Assam were held in 1985, the mainstream Assamese people gave their verdict in favour of AGP in hope that it would implement Assam Accord. In true sense of the term, the aspiration of the people would be fulfilling if they were able to establish the aspiration of the people and would be able to establish a “**Sonar Asom**” (Golden Assam).<sup>279</sup>

### **Assam Assembly Election 1991**

In 1991 both State Legislative Assembly election and the Lok Sabha Election were held simultaneously in Assam. Towards the later parts of AGP rule in Assam the law and order situation of the state was devastating. Under these circumstances the president’s rule was imposed in the state from 27<sup>th</sup> November 1990 to June 1991. After this election was held where 14 National and 245 regional parties took part. There were 1393 candidates for 126-Assembly constituencies in the state.<sup>280</sup>

The major political parties who contested in this election were Indian National Congress INC (I), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), Notun Asom Gana Parishad (NAGP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Janata Dal (JD), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI (M), United Minority Front (UMF), Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) and Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA). The major development in this election was the split of the regional party

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<sup>279</sup>Goswami, S. (2001). Changing Electoral Trends. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(19), 1584-1586.

<sup>280</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1991, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

AGP into two fractions namely AGP and NAGP.<sup>281</sup> Both were contesting the election independently. The hard-core supporters of the movement and the leaders of ASSU who worked with dedication for the interest of the party in 1985 and contested in that election were not there in 1991.

**Table 3.15: Winning Political Party Performance Assembly Election in 1991**

<b>Name of the Political Party</b>	<b>Seats Contested</b>	<b>Seats Won</b>	<b>Percentage of Votes Secured</b>
INC (I)	124	66	28.98%
BJP	47	10	6.42%
CPI	37	4	2.46%
CPI(M)	28	2	3.87%
JD	95	1	4.81%
AGP	120	19	18.07%
NAGP	85	5	5.50%
ASDC	8	4	1.61%
Independents	855	15	21.60%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1991

The small local parties, who joined hands with AGP, became more reactive against both AGP and NAGP in 1991 election. It is also worth mentioning that AGP could secure only 64 seats with a support base of 36 percentages of votes amidst all enthusiastic people of Assam in 1985. In 1991 election competition started among AGP and other regional parties with same groups of supporters as a result, voter who backed AGP in the earlier election were divided. INC took the advantage and captured most of the assembly seats. In this election, INC secured 66 seats among the 126 constituency in Assam. AGP and NAGP could retain only 19 and 5 seats respectively in this election. Their total vote share decreased up to 24 percentages compared to the previous figure of 34 percentages. On the other hand, it would be

<sup>281</sup> Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1991, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

important to note that in 1991 election BJP contested in 47 seats and won in 10 constituencies with a vote share of 6.42 percentage. It is for the first time in the electoral history of Assam that a large number of BJP candidates returned in an election. It is also interesting to see that a sizable amount of religious minority votes shifted their supporters to congresses which were with AGP and alliance in 1985 elections.<sup>282</sup>

It is because of the apprehension among that minority that if BJP comes to power than it will repeal IMDT Act which, might cause trouble for this people. INC fought this election for the issue of peace and development, improvements of communication, jobs for unemployed and resolution of the problem of demand for autonomy by Bodoland and Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill District. The AGP went on poll with the promises of greater economy and right of self-determination of the state, implementation of Assam Accord, resolution of ULFA problem, development of tea tribe's communities etc. the NAGP fought this election with the assurance to implement Assam Accord for speedy economic growth, decentralization of power along with autonomy for the state.

Even though most of the parties 'focus was on major issues like implementation of Assam Accord demands for more autonomy etc. but these issues could not influence the voters at large. It is observed that sense of insecurity among different ethnic groups, unprecedented rise of prices of essential commodities, unemployment problem and payment of salaries of government employees were the major issues before the voters of the state in 1991 election. Implementation of Assam Accord as

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<sup>282</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1991, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

promised by AGP and NAGP could not influence people as they had backed AGP on these issues in 1985 election. Another important factor of AGP's setback in 1991 election could be attributed to the emergence of United Liberation Front of Assam.<sup>283</sup>

## **Second Phase 1996-2001**

### **Assam Assembly Election 1996**

The 1996 election in Assam had several developments in the political scenario. Both AGP and NAGP reunited together that again strengthened the regional political party. On the other hand, Congress had to face a difficult situation with uprisings, corruption, indiscriminate use of state machinery particularly police and armed forces to suppress different anti-state activities in the state. In this election, there were 8 national parties 2 regional parties 5 state parties from the other state 3 registered but unrecognized parties and a number of independent candidates who contested. AGP had a social alliance with other non-congress political forces in the election. It was seen that most of the major issues of regional importance could not find their place in the manifesto of AGP in this election. Another important development that was observed in 1996 election was that many independent candidates contested in the election in the name of some community and organization.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>283</sup>Talukdar, Bhupendra. 2004

<sup>284</sup>Talukdar, Bhupendra. 2004

**Table 3.16: Winning Political Party Performance Assembly Election in 1996**

<b>Name of the Political Party</b>	<b>Seats Contested</b>	<b>Won</b>	<b>P.C. of Votes Secured</b>
INC(I)	122	34	30.57%
AIIC (T)	106	2	3.70%
BJP	117	4	10.41%
CPI	11	3	1.96%
CPI (M)	10	2	1.94%
AGP	96	59	29.71%
ASDC	5	5	1.98%
UMF	19	2	1.12%
Independents	657	11	17.47%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -1996

Election was held for 122 constituencies excluding for constituencies where elections were counter mended. The polling percentage of 1996 election was 78.92 percentage, which was almost similar to the voting percentage of 1985 election. In this election Congress (I) contested in all 122 seats but won only 34 seats with a vote share of 30.56 percentage, AGP who contested in 96 constituencies secured 59 seats with a vote share 29.70 percentage and remained in the first position. BJP contested in 117 seats and won with only 4 seats with a vote share of 10.41 percentage. There were 657 independent candidates out of which only 11 could return with a vote share of 17.41 percentages. CPI fought with 11 seats and secured three seats with vote share of 1.96 percentages. CPI (M) contested in 10 seats and secured 2 out of them with a vote share of 1.94 percentages. UMF contested in 19 seats and won 2 seats with a vote share of 1.12 percentages. ASDC contested in five seats and won all of them with a vote share of 1.98 percentages. Janata Dal, which fought in 33 assembly

constituencies, could not open their account at all.<sup>285</sup> The APGs victory with 59 seats was unexpected for the party itself as it could maintain a strong portion in lower Assam, by winning 29 seats. The party could also maintain command in Upper Assam and North bank of Brahmaputra except Cachar, Dibrugarh and Karimganj districts where Congress could lead over AGP. AGP and its allies' CPI, CPM, ASDC, were seen to be successful in all the districts of Assam. It is interesting to note that with almost same share of votes AGP secured almost double number of seats compared to the ruling Congress party, which was in vogue for quite some time.

In 1996 election, all the political parties except BJP avoided the core issue of illegal immigration from Bangladesh. The AGP itself maintained considerable distance from this for the majority vote bank without whose help being in power for long term was quite impossible. The party did not mention the issue of Bangladeshi migrants even in their election manifesto and cited all kinds of general promises to initiate the necessary action to implement the Assam Accord.<sup>286</sup>

There was no mention of any word about IMDT Act in the election manifesto of this regional party in 1996 election. Congress on the other hand assured that it would take care of all Indian citizens so that they are not victimizing in the determination and deportation of illegal migrants under IMDT Act of 1983.<sup>287</sup> The BJP's stand on the issue was very critical in this election. The party was of the opinion that Hindu Migrants from Bangladesh were refugees and only the Muslim migrants were the foreigners. According to the party Hindu Bangladeshi migrated to Assam due to

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<sup>285</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1996, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>286</sup>S, Goswami. 2011

<sup>287</sup>Walter F. (2005). IMDT Act and Immigration in North-Eastern India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(30), 3237-3240

atrocities on them by the Muslim religious fundamentalist in Bangladesh. Therefore, it was India's duty to provide settlements to these refugees. It is to be observed that the 1996 election was not based on any particular issue but was motivated by a particular wave. It is worth mentioning here that left parties of the state were almost reflected by the people in all assembly constituencies in 1996 election.

### **Third Phase 2001-2011**

#### **Assam Assembly Election 2001**

Some special features characterized the 2001 assembly election in Assam. For the first time Asom Gana Parisad and BJP had an alliance for which AGP had to lose three of each earlier allies, the CPI, CPM and United Peoples Party (UPP). CPI, CPM and Samajbadi Party together had to fight against the Congress. The AGP and BJP alliance could however manage to have a poll understanding with ABSU and the Holiram Terang fraction of the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC). There was confusion in the public minds about AGP and BJP alliance. One was the leading regional party and the other was BJP a national party advocating Hindutva. By doing, this AGP had to lose its basis among the non- Hindu minority community. Congress on the other hand with all its preparation was ready to fight against AGP and BJP alliance bringing the UMF and other smaller ethnic based parties to its fold.<sup>288</sup> Congress for the first time felt the need for electoral adjustment with minor groups as AGP and BJP alliance presented a tough equation before the party. Apart from Congress, AGP and BJP with left parties there were 27 parties who put up candidates in this election. There were 5 national, 12 state parties and 10 registered

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<sup>288</sup>Talukdar, B. (2004). Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour in Assam Legislative Assembly Elections, 1952 – 2001, Unpublished Thesis, University of Gauhati.



parties (Unrecognized) in the election.<sup>289</sup> Out of 126 constituencies of Assam Assembly, 102 were general 8 and 16 constituencies were reserved for SC and ST respectively. Total number of contesting candidates in this election was 916 out of which 393 were independents. Out of 14439167 electorates 10836651 voted in this election and polling percentage was 75.05 percentages.<sup>290</sup>

INC contested in the entire constituencies and won 71 seats with a vote share of 39.75 percentage followed by AGP which secured 20 seats out of 77 constituencies it contested with a vote share of 20.02 percentage. BJP, which contested in 46 seats won only eight seats with a vote share of 9.35 percentages, remained in the third position. NCP won three seats out of 62 contestants with a vote share of 2.51 percentages. ASDC (U), which contested in five seats, won two with a vote share 1.11 percentages. Two other national parties Samata Party (SAP) and Samajbadi Party (SP) won one seats each out of 19 and 23 candidates respectively. Rest of the contesting parties could not open their tally in 2001 assembly election of Assam.<sup>291</sup> It is seen that very significantly the left parties who were once a viable force in Assam were swept out during this election. Congress' victory in the election was to some extent expected. During the last AGP rule started in 1996 the people of Assam had a horrible fire of

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<sup>289</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2001, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>290</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2001, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>291</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2001, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

corruption, uprising of violent activities were the major causes of party's back in this election. Out of 393 candidates, only 19 independent candidates won this election.<sup>292</sup>

### **Assam Assembly Election 2006**

In 2006, State Assembly Election in Assam was contested by 997 candidates, out of which 316 were independents among which 102 were General, 8 SC and 16 ST constituencies. Total 8995612 male and 8434407 female electorates were there in the election out of which 6880991 males and 6319918 female electorates' casted their votes in the election. Total number of polling percentage was 75.77 percentages. In this election, 5 national parties, 9 state parties and 16 registered (unrecognized) parties along with the independents were there in the election process. INC, which contested in 120 seats, won 53 with a vote share of 32 percentages followed by AGP the regional party who put up their candidates in 100 constituencies, won in 24 seats with a vote share of 20.39 percentages.<sup>293</sup>

On the other hand, both BJP and AIUDF won 10 seats with a vote share of 11.98 percentages and 9.03 percentages respectively. In this election, AGP newly formed fraction AGP (P) that contested in 93 constituencies won only one seat with a vote share of 2.51 percentages. Among the left parties, CPI (M) who put up their candidates in 16 constituencies could win in two seats with a vote share of 1.43 percentages. National party NCP who had candidates in 45 constituencies won only one with a vote share of 2.13 percentages. On the other hand, regional party ASDC that contested in 5 constituencies secured only one seat with a vote share of 0.89

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<sup>292</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 1996, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>293</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2006, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India.

percentages. Independent won 22 seats in this election with a vote share of 16.60 percentages.

**Table 3.17: Winning Political Party Performance Assembly Election in 2006**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Contested</b>	<b>Won</b>	<b>Vote Polled</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
BJP	125	10	1581925	11.98%
CPI 9	9	1	134438	1.02%
CPI(M)	16	2	188901	1.43%
INC	120	53	4102479	31.08%
NCP	45	1	281038	2.13%
AGP	100	24	2692123	20.39%
AGP(P)	93	1	331491	2.51%
ASDC	5	1	117941	0.89%
AUDF	69	10	1191500	9.03%
LKS	5	1	32511	0.25%
Independents	316	22	2191167	16.60%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -2006

It is observed that in this election voters were polarized mostly in terms of religion and community. BJPs gradual gain in this election was for the party's continuing effort to unite Hindu votes particularly among the Bengali minorities, which it was successful to at large extent. On the other hand, AIUDF could enrich majority particularly in the middle and lower Assam area.

Congress could retain as the largest party due to this polarization mostly in terms of religious minorities, BJPs Hindutva agenda and AGPs weak stand to represent the aspiration of indigenous people most particularly caste Hindu groups.

On the other hand, during Congress regime the economy of the state was restored to a normal standard, which was otherwise destroyed by the mis-governance of the AGP in the second tenure. The government employees and the people who did not get their monthly salaries for months and years started getting regular salaries under Congress's pro-employee's policies. However, it was seen that Congress lost its grip

in many of its traditional vote bank due to the emergence of AIUDF in many parts of the state, which gained popularity and faith among the religious minority people.<sup>294</sup>

### **Assam Assembly Election 2011**

Assam is unique in terms of its diverse racial and linguistic elements. The society in Assam has been gradually changing in the fronts of religion culture and languages due to long term immigration of people from the neighbouring countries. According to 2001 census, there were 67 percentage of Hindu and 30.30 percentage of Muslim population. The Schedule Caste and schedule Tribes represents 7.4 percentages and 12.1 percentages respectively. The major linguistic groups are the Assamese with 57.8 percentages and the Bengalis with 21.6 percentage. The population of Assam is also divided in several other categories such as immigrants Muslims, immigrants Hindus, Assamese Hindus and Bengali Hindus, Assamese Muslims and Bengali Muslims, General Caste Hindus, Nepalese, Tea garden community, ST and SC community etc. show the electoral politics of the state reflects the political significant of multi ethnic and linguistic reality.<sup>295</sup>

Congress party dominated electoral politics of the state of Assam since its first election in 1952. The party had to face its first major setback in 1978 assembly election when it could win only 8 seats with a vote share 8.8 percentage. The election was held after Janata Parties formation of government in the centre. In Assam under the leadership of Golap Borbora the newly emerged party came to power with the support of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) and some other independent winning candidates. The CPM and other left parties extend their support to the

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<sup>294</sup>S, Goswami. 2011

<sup>295</sup> Ibid, Goswami, 2011

government from outside but the Janata government could not last for a full term and fell even before the 1980 Lok Sabha election paving the way for a short lived congress ministry. This was the period when Assam movement was in its peak and president rule was imposed in the state by the centre. The 1983 Assembly election was held in Assam in midst of socio political turmoil. The government formed by the Congress after this election did not have any popular legitimacy. This government also could not last for its stipulated period and elections were held in 1985 with new socio political conditions in Assam. The AGP came into existence as a major regional party in Assam politics but this party also could not retain power in the next election held in 1991 due to immaturity and in fighting among the party leaders.

Another important reason for AGPs failure was the sudden upsurge of violent activities of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Under these circumstances, gradual recovery of Congress in the state started in late 1990s. Congress could again form government after 1991 election due to failure of AGP in multiple fronts. In this election, Congress won 66 seats securing 28.98 percentage of vote share. Congress remained in power for a full term but in 1996 election it had to face another setback and could secure 34 seats with a vote share 30.57 percentage. In this election two factions of AGP were united and won 59 seats with vote share of 29.71 percentages. AGP formed the government but could not meet the expectation of the people at large. As a result, the party lost the election battle in 2001 winning only 20 seats. This time a clear mandate was given in favour of Congress who won 70 seats with a major vote share of 39.75 percentages. In 2006 assembly election, there have been declines in Congress seats and vote share. In this election, both BJP and

AIUDF won 10 seats each and AGP got only 24 seats. Congress formed the government with the help of BPF who had won 11 seats in this election.

In 2011, election in Assam was held with a total number of 18188269 electorates out of which 1309440 electorates casted their votes in the election leading to a poll percentage of 75.92 percentages. Total numbers of 981 candidates were put up by 5 national parties 3 state parties from Assam, 8 state parties from other states and 8 registered (unrecognized) and independents. In this election out of 126 constituencies, 102 were general and 8 and 16 were SC and ST respectively. In the election, Congress contested in 126 constituencies won 78 seats with a vote share of 39.39 percentages that was followed by AIUDF, which secured 18 seats out of 78 constituencies it contested with a vote share of 12.57 percentages. AGP, which contested in 104 constituencies, could return in 10 seats with a vote share of 16.29 percentage. AITC a state party from West Bengal who came to Assam for the first time contested in 103 constituencies won one seat with a vote share of 12.045 percentages. Out of 263 independent candidates, only two returned in this election with a vote share of 9.17 percentage (table 3.32).<sup>296</sup>

**Table 3.18: Winning Political Party Performance Assembly Election in 2011**

Party	Contested	Won	Vote Polled	Percentage
BJP	120	5	1584895	11.47%
INC	126	78	5443781	39.39%
AGP	104	10	2251935	19.72%
AIUDF	78	18	1737415	19.87%
BPF	29	12	847520	6.13%
AITC	103	1	283683	2.02%
Independents	263	2	1267925	9.17%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -2011

<sup>296</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2011, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

The mandates in 2011 election were clear and decisive as Congress was the largest single party. The Congress Party win for third term in Assam was a rare achievement in a state in India where anti-incumbency was more often. In an election that registered a 76.03 percentage, voters turn out. The Congress managed a facile victory with the Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi managing three consecutive term emulating erstwhile Congress leader and Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha who managed to do so despite allegation of corruption from opposition party and section of media and civil society in the run up to the election.<sup>297</sup>

In this election, Congress and BJP fought in the election on their own but Congress had an understanding with BPF, which had a post poll alliance. Congress gained 25 seats more from its earlier election in 2006 with an increased vote share by 39.39 percentages. On the other hand, BJP who could not make alliance with AGP secured only 5seats with a vote share of 11.47 percentages. AGP due to its internal rift and factionalism managed to get only 10 seats with a vote share of 16.29 percentages. On the other hand, AIUDF that emerged as a political party during 2006 election could gain both in terms of vote share and in terms of winning candidates. The party could manage to popularize itself among the Muslim minorities groups especially to the immigrants living in char areas. BPF and Trinamool Congress also could increase their position in this election but the left parties were unable to win any seats in 2011 election (table 3.33).<sup>298</sup>

There were different issues before the 2011 election. Among them was the government's initiative to hold talks with insurgent groups particularly ULFA with a

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<sup>297</sup>Sanjib Baruah, 'Assam, Don't Hold Your Breath', Forbes India, 3 May 2011.

<sup>298</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2011, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

commitment for establishment of peace, which lent the Congress party with good credit. Moreover, the government pro-people initiatives like MNREGA; decision to provincialism venture school, distribution of laptops to the meritorious students, regularization of services of the teachers under operation Black Board scheme etc. boosted the party with large incentives. Moreover, the government's decision for inclusive growth through inclusive planning and governance impressed the people largely. Another advantage of the having the Congress party's government for the second term was to have the same party's government in the centre for which grants in aids and other central schemes could be implemented without delay particularly by the approval of Prime Minister's office as P.M Manmohan Singh himself represented Assam in the Rajya Sabha.<sup>299</sup>

The choice of candidates was another aspect for which Congress could manage to secure 78 seats. The failure of AGP and BJP to form an alliance had also been attributed to the gain of Congress in this election. Due to this a major portion of Assamese speaking Muslims who were earlier supporters of AGP and the Hindus who backed BJP in earlier election supported Congress party during this time. In this election, AIUDF was the only party whose vote share and tally of seats increased from Congress.

#### **Fourth Phase 2016**

##### **Assam Assembly Election 2016**

It has been observed that during the 1980s governance has become a primordial issue of polity of the state across the nation. There has been a shift from multi-dimensional understanding of democracy to a one directional understanding of good governance. It

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<sup>299</sup>S, Goswami. 2011, *op.cit.*,



was one of the major focuses of the BJP before the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The party tried to consolidate the voters on the issue of development and good governance in the 2016 assembly election in Assam against the mis- governance of Congress led government for three consecutive term. 2016 assembly election in Assam was characterised by different factors like anti-incumbency against the three terms rule Congress government widespread corruption that made people desperate for a change. BJP could catch hold of the situation and fought the election with well-thought and high voltage campaign. The formation of BJP government at the centre under the leadership of Narendra Modi, could also influence the perception of the voters to some extent. People looked at BJP as the only visible a viable alternative to Congress. This assembly election changes the nature of political dynamics of the state and made a political history.

The 2016 assembly election held with a total number of 1990755 electorates, which is an increase of around 18 lakhs from the 2011 election. Out of them 16891142 electorates voted in the election, which increased the poll percentage electoral history of Assam to 84.26 percentages. In this election, five national parties, 3 state parties, 29 state parties from other states put up 690 candidates along with 496 independents candidate. BJP, which contested in 89 seats secured 60 with a vote share of 29.51 percentages and became the largest party, which was followed by Congress, which contested in 122 constituencies, won only 26 seats with a vote share of 30.96 percentages. AGP contested in 30 seats secured 14 with a vote share of 8.14 percentages, AIUDF contested in 74 seats won 13 with a vote share of 13.05

percentages, BPF, which contested in 13 Constituencies, secured 12 seats with a vote share of 3.94 percentages.<sup>300</sup>

**Table 3.19: Winning Political Party Performance Assembly Election in 2016**

Party	Contested	Won	Vote Polled	Percentage
BJP	89	60	4992185	29.51%
INC	122	26	5238655	30.96%
AGP	30	14	1377482	8.14%
AIUDF	74	13	2207945	13.05%
BPF	13	12	666057	3.94%
IND	496	1	1867531	11.04%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report Assembly Election in Assam -2006

This time only one independent candidate out of 496 returned in the election rest of the parties could not manage to open their tally in this election. Congress setback and BJP's spectacular victory in 2016 election in Assam can be attributed to multiple factors and developments.

**Firstly**, the formation of BJP government in the centre under the leadership of Narendra Modi who had along with the party president Amit Shah made different promises during the election campaign for 2014 Lok Sabha election in Assam. This time BJP could have mobilized the voters of Assamese mainstream in the name of cultural safeguard of their identities. BJP promised to put off the entire immigrated foreigners from Bangladesh and made the local people mainly anti-foreigner movement supporters united.

**Secondly**, during the latter part of the third term of congress government, there was unprecedented conflict among the party leaders. A dissident group was created under the leadership of Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, a powerful leader and minister of Tarun

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<sup>300</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on Assam Assembly Election 2016, New Delhi: Publication Division Election Commission of India.

Gogoi's Cabinet. Both Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma stood face to face with each other and conflict started over certain issues, which could not be well settled by the party's high command leading to the joining of Dr Sarma in BJP with some of his supporters and sitting MLAs.

**Thirdly**, the effort of BJP to make a rainbow alliance with the local parties mainly with the AGP, BPF, ASDC and Tiwa Autonomous Council in which they succeeded in putting greater challenge to both Congress and AIUDF. BJP could project both Congress and AIUDF as the parties of religious minorities, which were projected to be the major challenge to language culture and other identities of indigenous inhabitants of Assam.

**Fourthly**, stagnation came in the functioning of the congress led government due to internal conflicts for which development could not be expedited as expected by the people of the state. The departments covering the primary sectors like health, education suffered as the Minister in Charge Dr. H.B Sarma could not give enough effort and time who otherwise was not interested in doing so due to his conflict with the Chief Minister.

**Fifthly**, another important factor, of BJP's victory in the election was the presence of the party in the state since the first assembly election in the name of Jana Sangha (BJS). The BJP workers were silently working at the grass root levels in the state to strengthen their organization. However, as a political party it could not emerge as a powerful force prior to 1991 assembly election where it was succeeded in winning 10 seats for the first time.

**Sixthly**, BJP could well capitalize the Hindu religious institutions and culture in the state. They appropriated the image of Srimanta Sankar Deva, a popular cultural icon

of the state who prefaced Ek Saran Naam Dharma to mobilize people's sentiments. Moreover, the party workers used religious institutions like Sattras, Namghars and Temples to popularize their Hindutva ideology in the Brahmaputra Valley of the state. To catch up with the people of lower Assam area where most of the people were the devotees of Shakti Peeths, BJP and Sangh Parivar used the symbol of Maa Kamakhya who is very much revered in Assam. They also used the image of Assamese heroes like Lachit Barphukan and historical incidents like Battle of Saraighat in their campaigning during the election process.

**Seventhly**, another important agenda, which helped BJP to gain majority in 2016 assembly election in Assam, was the slogans of "Jati Mati Vetii" (Nationality Land Place Residence) and the propaganda of "Paribartan" (Change).

**Eighthly**, before the election BJP promised to give ST status to most of the indigenous communities of Assam. It helped the party in gaining support of the people from these communities.

**Ninthly**, another important issue for which Congress had to face setback in both 2014 Lok Sabha and 2016 assembly election was the stand of its government towards the popular people's movements, particularly the movements led by various organizations like, KMSS (Krisak Mukti Sangram Sammitee), India against Corruption, etc.

**Tenthly**, most important factor for BJP's gain in this election was the polarisation of people in the name of religion and communities. BJP not only targeted congress but also AIUDF as its main enemies. The leaders of the party could make people understand that AIUDF has become a challenge to the political space of the indigenous people. People were tried to be convince that AIUDF is party of religious minorities most of them are doubtful immigrants (particularly of muslim origin).

BJP as a political party had not been able to step into the politics of Assam for a long period of time in spite of its strategic approaches. The party has always been tried to make alliances with local regional parties mainly with AGP from the very beginning. The party won only one seats in 1985, 10seats in 1991, 4 seats in 1996, 8 seats in 2001, and 10 seats in 2006, 5 seats in 2011. But there has been a gradual increase in the vote share of the party starting from 0.07 percentage in 1985, 6.42 percentage in 1991, 10.41 percentage in 1996, 9.35 percentage in 2001, 9.98 percentage in 2006 and 11.47 percentage in 2011 assembly election. In 2016 election party vote share increased up to 29.51 percentage almost similar to Congress party who got 30.96 percentage of vote share in this election. With a similar vote share BJP won 60 seats and Congress got 26 seats. This has happened only due to Sharpe polarisation of the voters in multi-dimensional direction.

## CHAPTER IV

# TRENDS OF ELECTORAL POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY AREA

### 4.1 Background of Jorhat District

Jorhat, a district of Assam, was carved out of the Sibsagar district in 1984. The district is spread over 2851 sq. km. with a population of 1,091,295 (2011 census) and a density of 383 persons per sq. km. The sex ratio is 956 females per 1000 males. The district has five Legislative Assembly Constituencies, viz. Jorhat, Majuli, Titabor, Mariani and Teok. The Majuli Sub-Division has a tribal population of 70% who are primarily “Misings”. Floods are frequent in the island and there is a deluge every year.<sup>301</sup>

Jorhat has been a vibrant place and is a perfect mixture of tradition and modernity. The town treaded through several major events of history and thereby attained its location and attributes, which has been accounted here in the succeeding paragraphs.

#### Jorhat in Historical Perspective

Jorhat has a unique history of its significant past in terms of rebellions, insurrections and destruction. Towards the end of the Ahom rule in Assam the present place of Jorhat town became known in the chronicles of the Ahom age. Records of the construction of Garh Ali and Hatigarh can be traced between 1604 AD to 1641 AD during the reign of king Susenpha alias Pratap Singha.<sup>302</sup> The history of Jorhat district revolves round the Jorhat town that is now headquarter of the district. Jorhat came

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<sup>301</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

<sup>302</sup>Robinson, William. (1975). *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, New Delhi: K.M. Mittal, Sanskaran Prakasan.

into prominence when the Ahom King Gaurinath Singha shifted the capital from Sibsagar or Rangpur to Jorhat in 1794 by joining two *haats* or marketplace - “Macharhat” and “Chowkihat” which existed on the two different banks of the river Bhogdoi during the 18th Century. The decaying and declining Tunkhungia Ahom Dynasty established Jorhat as the new capital in the closing years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>303</sup> In the year 1794, the Ahom King Gaurinath Singha shifted the capital from Sibsagar (erstwhile Rangpur) to Jorhat. This town was a flourishing commercial metropolis but destroyed after a series of the Burmese invasions of Assam since 1817 till the arrival of the British force in the year 1824 under the stewardship of David Scott and Captain Richard.<sup>304</sup>

According to the chronicles towards the latter part of the Ahom rule Jorhat was known as 'Dichoi Koth' - meaning the camp on the bank of river Dichoi. Jorhat or Juriahath derives its name from existence of the two parallel markets or 'haats' on the two banks of the river Dichoi or Bhogdoi, which flows through Jorhat town. In this place there were two 'hats' (markets) namely 'Phukanarhat' and 'Masharhat' which came to be - known as Jorhat (Jor means twin, 'hut' means market). There are some neighbouring villages, which were established and named in those days according to the profession of the villagers. They are Nowbaisa (Boatman), Dulia (Palanquin Carrier), Dhekargarha (maker of Dhekar iron device in the Palanquin), Jakharia (Supplier of Gunpowder), Kuhumjogonia (Yolk Supplier), Rajguru (Royal Priest), Nakari (New Archer), Dhenushusa (Bow-Maker), Sonari (Goldsmith), etc. Thus, it is evident from the old records that the neighbouring area of Jorhat attained a sort of prominence. The Ahom during their rule for prolonged six hundred years shifted their capital for several times.<sup>305</sup>

The old capital Gargaon and Rangpur were established with some plans and programmes. However, the shifting of capital from Rangpur to Jorhat was caused by some internal rebellions, Moamoria uprising. When Moamorias became supreme after the capture of Rangpur along with a vast region of upper Assam, the king Gaurinath

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<sup>303</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/67673/10/10\\_chapter%205.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/67673/10/10_chapter%205.pdf) [Accessed 20/10/18]

<sup>304</sup><http://online.assam.gov.in/history1?webContentId=173375> [Accessed 20/9/18]

<sup>305</sup>Hamilton, Francis. (1963). *An Account of Assam*, (1809), Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.

Singha compelled to flee from his capital to Guwahati. His Prime Minister Purnananda Buragohain remained in this place for seven-long years protecting and consolidating the position of the Ahom Monarchy which was facing great danger due to increasing strength of the rebellious Moamorias. Ultimately, the Moamorias had to leave the place when captain Welsh arrived at Jorhat. In these circumstances, Pumananda Buragohain transferred the seat of capital in July 1794 to the Dichoi koth for better security.<sup>306</sup>

During this period, the Ahom Government paid attention for the all-round development of Jorhat. Accordingly, old roads were repaired and some new roads were constructed connecting Jorhat with surrounding regions. The Ahom Kings also constructed a good number of tanks and temple shed during this period. The important literary works of this period are also noteworthy. The restoration period of Purandar Singha was marked for the chronicles of Assam. Important chronicles written during this period at Jorhat were *Asom Buranjisar*<sup>1</sup> by Kashinath Tamuli Phukan, *Kaliabharat Buranji* by Dutiram Hazarika, *Belimar Buranji* by Bisweswar Vaidhyadhipa, *Barbhuyan Buranji* by Monpur Arandhora. Moniram Dewan also started writing of his historical works namely *Buranji Vivekratna* at the same time at Jorhat. Jorhat, the last capital of Ahoms was not only a city of pomp and grandeur, but it remained for a long time as a centre of Assamese culture and civilization.<sup>307</sup>

Jorhat "The last Capital of the Ahom Kingdom" has archaeological values associated to Rajamaidam— the last burial mounds of the Ahom kings. Nestled in the tea gardens dotted around sprawling in and around the city, boasts of the Tocklai Research Association (TRA) are the oldest and the largest tea research station of its kind in the world.

Today, it has grown into a thriving cosmopolitan town with a strong sense of character and identity. It is the best laid out town in Upper Assam with broad roads, cutting each other at right angles. People of Jorhat have traditionally displayed a high interest towards art and culture. Jorhat is known as "The Cultural Capital of Assam".

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<sup>306</sup>Barua, Rai Saheb Golap Chandra. (1985). Ahom Burunji, Guwahati: Spectrum Publications.

<sup>307</sup><http://www.asiguwahaticircle.gov.in/> [Accessed 03/01/18]



## Jorhat during Burmese Invasion

Gaurinath Singha tried to hunt down all those previously involved people in the Moamaria rebellion from newly establish capital at Jorhat. The Bura-Gohain (Prime Minister) setup an army on the model of the British regiment and brought back order into the chaos. In the meanwhile, Raja Gaurinath Singh was seized with a mortal illness and died on 19 December 1794 and Kinaram (Kamaleswar Singh) succeeded. Later on, on the death of Kamaleswar Singha, his young brother Chandrakanta Singha who was then aged 16 years only succeeded to the throne and Purnananda Buragohain and then Prime Minister became more powerful and began to run the administration as a de-facto king.<sup>308</sup>

It was in 1816, one Badan Chandra Phukan, appointed as Borphukan of Gauhati sought the help of Burmese King to oust Buragohain from Jorhat as the later was determined to eliminate him. In 1816, Burmese army of about 16000 men attacked from the south. At this point of time, Purnananda Buragohain died and his son Ruchinath was appointed Buragohain. The army of the new Buragohain fought a battle but the Burmese were victorious in occupying Jorhat and retained Chandrakanta as the King. With this defeat Ruchinath Burhagohain fled to Gauhati.<sup>309</sup>

At this time, the king appointed Badan Chandra Phukan the Prime Minister with the new designation “Mantri Phukan”.<sup>310</sup> The Burmese army was sent back in April 1817 with a great amount of compensation (Sinha, 2012). After the departure of the Burmese, differences cropped up in between the Mantri Phukan and Dhani, the Barbaruah. As a result, MantriPhukan was murdered and the king invited Ruchinath Buragohain to return to Jorhat for resuming charges. Ruchinath declined the offer and sent down his brother Jagannath Dhekial Phukan to invite Prince Purandar Singh, son of Brajnath Konwar from Chilmari to return to Assam and take charge of the country’s administration.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>308</sup>Baruah, A. (1997). “Tea industry and Jorhat”, published in Jorhat 200, Jorhat Bicentenary Commemorative Volume, 1997, p.49 & 50.

<sup>309</sup>Gait, Sir Edward, (1995). *A History of Assam*, Guwahati: Lawyers Book Stall, pp. 230-250

<sup>310</sup>Baruah, A. (1997). “Tea industry and Jorhat”, published in Jorhat 200, Jorhat Bicentenary Commemorative Volume, 1997, p.49 & 50.

<sup>311</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/135275/9/09\\_chapter%202.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/135275/9/09_chapter%202.pdf) [Accessed 03/01/18]

Later on, Brajanath and Ruchinath raised a force consisting of four companies under the command of Jagannath Dhekial Phukan and marched towards Jorhat. Purandar Singha was made king by the Ruchinath Buragohainousting king Chandrakanta Singha in 1818. At this time, the Burmese again invaded and petition to the British government was made seeking to repel the enemies but all efforts failed. A troop under the command of Robert Bruce met with a defeat in 1821. The Ahom army was totally routed and Purandar Singh fled to Gauhati (Baruah, 1997). At the end of June 1822, Burmese commander was declared Raja of Assam.

Jorhat became a civil sub-Division in the year of 1869 under Sibsagar district and in the year 1911 Jorhat was declared as district, headquarter of Sibsagar district with Major Play Fare as the first Deputy Commissioner. British showed keen interest in Jorhat district, their interest emanating from the potential of the district for growing tea. They established a number of tea gardens employing a large number of labours of different origins.

All through the ages, Jorhat continued to be a seat of learning and eminent scholars of Jorhat made very significant contribution through their literary works. Erstwhile Sibsagar district was divided twice on administrative convenience and its erstwhile Sub-Divisions Jorhat, Golaghat became full-fledged districts.

### **Jorhat in the Moamari Rebellion**

When the Moamoria Rebellion began in 1794, Swargadeo Gaurinath Singha shifted his capital to Disoibahar, now in Jorhat. It happened so that the Moamoria revolt gained momentum as several disgruntled princes and nobleman joined the revolt and shook the very foundation of the Ahom Kingdom of Assam. Purnananda Buragahain, the then most powerful Prime Minister in the royal court of the Ahoms, had to withstand the worst of the revolt. Therefore, he established many Koths or forts to encounter the Moamorias. He built two such forts on the two banks of the stream Desso (Bhogdoi). Earlier in the year, 1789 he established a camp on the western bank of the Desso and called it Desso Bahar, from which he directed the fight against the rebels. It was at this place where the capital was shifted.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>312</sup>Ibid. p. 5

## British Entry in Jorhat

Ahom King Gaurinath appealed to the British in Bengal for help. It was in 1792-93, British deputed Captain Welsh with a regiment of infantry to assist the Ahom King Gaurinath Singh, to quell a rebellion by Mayamara Vaishnavites. When he arrived, the Raja had already fled upper Assam. The whole country was in a state of rebellion and anarchy. "The Raja had fled to Guwahati – driven by the Muttoks (inhabitants of the country round Debrooghar) and disciples of the Moamariah Gosains joined by other priests and followers of Vaishnavite Sattras west of Dihing. They had captured the capital, Gargaon and held sway. During the three years, the British regiment remained in Assam and Captain Wales almost restored the complete ascendancy of the authority of the Ahom King or rather a council of State. Nevertheless, expedition under him had to return into British territory in 1790 with due orders of Governor General Sir John Shore."<sup>313</sup>

The British Rule, though, was not free from rebellions and revolutions, contributed to the re-emergence of this historical town. From the very first decade of the British rule, the great revolutionists who emerged were Gomdhar Konwar, Jeuram, and Piyali Barua. The British system of administration came into vogue in the year 1839 with an established Police Thana. During the great Sepoy Mutiny and Piyali Barua was sabotaged and these leaders were hanged in public at this very place in 1858.<sup>314</sup>

In 1885, a narrow gauge train service namely Jorhat Provincial Railway had come into operation and ultimately became instrumental in rapid growth of the tea industry. Presently, Jorhat is on its road to modernization with many commercial and non-commercial establishments setting foot on its soil. Apart from being, a commercial centre Jorhat also became the major centre of socio-political activities that continues even today.<sup>315</sup>

However, the Civil Sub-division under Sibsagar district at Jorhat was formed in 1869, this area was declared as administration headquarters of the undivided Sibsagar

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<sup>313</sup> Baruah, K.K. (1997). *Some thoughts about Jorha*. Jorhat: Jorhat 80 Bicentenary Commemorative Volume, p.271

<sup>314</sup> Baruah, K.K. (1997). *Some thoughts about Jorhat*. Jorhat: Jorhat 80 Bicentenary Commemorative Volume, p. 275

<sup>315</sup> Baruah, K.K., 1997. 245

district in 1911, which comprised the present Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, and parts of Karbi-Anglong district with Major A. Play Fair as the first Deputy Commissioner.

### **Jorhat as the Last Ahom Kingdom and last colony of British Empire in Assam**

Jorhat was the last capital of the Ahom Kings of Assam. The capital played an important role in the development of the state, because of its location on the Cheuni Ali. Now, known as 23 National Highway 37, this road provides a roadway connecting Upper Assam with lower Assam. The Prime Minister, Purnananda Boragohain played a very important role in transforming the small area into a populous town by shifting the official residences of Ahom nobles like Borgohain, Buragohain and Borpatragohains. This also resulted in the migration of skilled and professionals people to Jorhat. The criss-cross roads show that the town was planned in such a way that no single road has to bear the entire traffic. To ensure water supply, the Desoi River, which flows far to the west, was diverted and made to flow to the east of the town.<sup>316</sup>

During the British rule, with its rich traditions, Jorhat became a model district Headquarter. As Jorhat already had a high level of judicial traditions and with the establishment of the Court at Jorhat it became a leader in legal knowledge and this was the foundation of a very strong and dignified bar of that time. Most of the Govt. Departments set up their zonal offices in Jorhat like many other places of Upper Assam for which the town became an important place for business man and administrators.

The town's name was possibly first recorded in the context of tea in the year 1834, when Captain Jenkins, who in 1834 became the agent to the Governor General for North Eastern Frontier at Jorhat, was exploring economic possibilities of Assam. From 1853, Jorhat became a very important name when the Williamson brothers applied to the Governor for a lease of 720 acres of land at Chinnamora. The opening of tea gardens around Jorhat town by the British tea planters led to socio-economic and sports activities in the town. Jorhat became a business town due to the production of tea in this place. The tea industry also played an important role in creating an

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<sup>316</sup>Baruah, K.K., 1997 p. 250

academic environment in the town with the establishment of research and educational institutes (Baruah, 1997). Assam was the last region to be colonized by the British and turned into one of their Indian Provinces. The people of Assam have had to pay the most dearly for their independence. It is true that the sun of independent Assam set at Jorhat, but a new dawn was witnessed again. It became the connoisseur of art, culture, literature, education, scientific research, music and in so many other fields.<sup>317</sup> Jorhat occupies an important place in the development of education in Assam. Jorhat district has always been in the forefront of learning. The educational system of Jorhat is the outcome of the tradition and history of the past two centuries. Social cultural, political, economic, technical developments play their great role in the development of education at Jorhat.

### **Role of Jorhat in India's Freedom Movement**

Jorhat may be considered as the focal point of freedom movement of Assam. In 1826, East India Company had annexed Assam. Just after two years, an attempt at freedom was organized under the leadership of Dhananjay Burhagohain in which Gumadhar Konwar was declared as the Swargadeo or King in the Ahom traditional style. The rebels with arms marched towards Jorhat and there was a fight with the East India Company's forces near present-day Mariani town. The area in and around the battle field was plundered and was victim of atrocities meted out by the Company's forces. Thus, long before Sepoy mutiny of 1857, Jorhat was the stage of first revolt against Foreign Rule.<sup>318</sup>

Jorhat came under British rule along with the other parts of Assam in 1826 because of Treaty of Yandaboo concluded between British authority and Burmese army. But it has been a historical fact that the British east India Company started its direct political control of Assam from 1824. It has been proved in the writings of historians Dr. Jogendra Nath Phukan in his article "The British Rule in Assam and Treaty of Yandaboo".

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<sup>317</sup>Barpujari, H. K. (1977). *Political history of Assam, Vol. I*. Guwahati: Publication Board Government of Assam, pp. 350-355

<sup>318</sup>Barpujari, H. K. 1977

However, the formal emancipation of British Raj started in Assam only in 1826, which created a new era of political, social and cultural life with the introduction of western model of administration. As there were not sufficient skilled administrators in Assam, British had to appoint such people from Bengal to run their administrative system. These people from Bengal started all government activities by using Bengali language and influence of which was notified lately in Jorhat. In 1884, Jaganaath Baruah established the Jorhat Sarvajanic Sabha, which unfolded in a new political history not only in Jorhat but also in the whole of Assam.<sup>319</sup>

### **Student's Participation in Freedom Struggle from Jorhat**

Many students from several educational institutions of Jorhat took part in different stages of freedom struggle. One of the founding students' organisations, Asom Satra Sanmilani took the initiative in this regard to run the movement. Students of Jorhat collected donation many of the students were restricted by authority of the institution for taking part in this anti British movement. Among the students of Jorhat, Sashidhar Aliya Boruah of Jorhat Bezbaruah High School was the forerunner in this struggle. Many of the prominent personalities of this area opposed the decision of students taking part in the freedom struggle at the cost of their regular academic affairs. Under the leadership of H.K Boruah, a public meeting was organised in the presence of Benudhor Rajkhuwa, Guluk Chanda Baruah, Iswar Prasad Baruah on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1921 to spread awareness about to keep the students away from the struggle.<sup>320</sup>

Another meeting in this regard was organized on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, in Jorhat Boys School under the leadership of Siva Prasad Baruah to prevent the students from taking active part in the struggle. In spite of all this effort, many students left school to join the struggle. During these period efforts were made by many people to make people sensitive about the issue of nationalism. Some of them resigned job under the British administration and opened school to teach the students about Indian nationalism and aims of the freedom struggle. For example, Pescara Krishna Kanta Bhattacharya resigned from his job and started a school on 11 February 1921. He also established a

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<sup>319</sup>Choudhury, P. C. (1966), *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.* Guwahati: Dept. of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam, pp. 86-93

<sup>320</sup>Borpujari, H.K. (1992). *A Comprehensive History of Assam Vol. III*, Guwahati: Publication Board of Assam, pp. 251-255

printing press and started publishing a paper namely *Asam Bilakhini*. Students of that period were more motivated and encouraged by the visit of M.K Gandhi to Jorhat on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1921. Many people came to Jorhat from neighbouring areas to see Gandhiji and attend to his meeting.<sup>321</sup>

On 28<sup>th</sup> August of that year, around 25 thousand people assembled at Jorhat for meeting to be addressed by Gandhiji. Simplicity of Gandhiji attracted the people across caste, community and religion. Many tea garden workers also attended that meeting. One tea garden labour, Arenga Telenga of Chinamora Tea estate was sent to jail for three months of rigorous imprisonment. The British administration played a very crucial role to dominate the tea garden workers and suppress the movement and not to join in any agitational activities against the British rule. At the initial stage, the leaders of the religious institution did not participate in the non-cooperation movement. However, in the later phase, Satradhikar of Garamura Satra Pitambar Deva Goswami took a lead in the movement. As a part of the movement, many Congress volunteers of Jorhat made door-to-door campaign in support of non-cooperation movement. They tried to promote Gandhian values of self-reliance and encouraged people to produce cotton and use hand woven fabric instead of imported one.<sup>322</sup> They also tried to convince people to stop selling alcoholic liquor, opium etc. even during the festivals and functions. The volunteers tried to make people impress about the Gandhian way of struggle.

People associated with the movement made effort to reach out the remotest villages to motivate people not to pay taxes to the British administration. As a result, in the year 1922-23 there was a decrease to an amount of Rs. 2400 in tax collection from the earlier amount of Rs. 18000. Among other people of Jorhat, a resident of Baligaon area took special initiative to popularize non-cooperation movement among the people. He even changed his lifestyle to follow Gandhian ideals among others. Leaders who took active part in the struggle were Kuladhar Chaliha, Vidhyadhor

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<sup>321</sup>Guha, A. (1991). *Medieval and Early Colonial Assam*, Calcutta: K P Bagchi, pp. 120-131

<sup>322</sup>Baruah, H. N. (1972). *Swadhinata Sangramat Assam*, Guwahat: Bani Prakasan, pp. 126-135

Sarma, Harbeswa Borchetiya, Maheswar Borkakoti, Debeswar Sarma, Hem Sarma, Rameswar Bhattacharya, Lakheswar Baruah, etc.<sup>323</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that the participation of women in the movement was also significant. Eminent women leaders like Annada Devi Borkakoti, Sashiprava Chaliha, Nirmala Devi, Hemlota Bezbaruah, Icon Bhuyan, Mukheswari Devi, Thaneswari Bhattacharya, SashiBhuyan, SardaBora, Asomi Bora, Gulapi Dutta, etc. took active part in the freedom struggle at that period. The role of police administration was totally against the movement and they started harassing the volunteer, which made the agitator more vocal against the administration. Police started operation in search of the volunteer in the areas like Simuluguri, Teok, Chaukhat, Hatigarh etc.<sup>324</sup> In this operation British administration dismissed many Heads of the villages from their job, they also imposed community taxation on the people of the areas who either supported or took part in the non-cooperation movement. Many leaders of the movement were put in the jail; police atrocities were mostly guided by dictatorial principle. Many of the prisoner of the movement were compelled to salute the administration by force. In Jorhat jail a political prisoner Deocharan Tripathi opposed the direction of administration and started hunger strike inside the jail. No justice was given to this prisoner and he continued his strike until his death on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1926.

British administration used armed forces to dominate the agitation in the tea garden areas. One worker namely the police beat Muchi of Teok tea estate was beaten to death by the police. Under the institution made by European managers the common people as well as religious leaders like Sattradhikar were not spared by the administration. Once Governor John Henry Cars (1922-25) summoned Pitambor Deva Goswami of Garmura Satra to Jorhat Circuit House and asked him to justify his activities like religious tours and establishment of schools etc. It is a worth noting point that a total number of 78 people were imprisoned for taking lead in non-cooperation movement in Assam out of which 10 were from erstwhile Sivsagar

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<sup>323</sup>Laxminath, Phukan. (1999). *Gandhir Pora Rupknoweroloi*, Guwahat: K P Bagchi, pp. 85-106

<sup>324</sup>Ibid. p. 25



district. From 14 November 1921 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1922, a total number of 197 people were arrested in charge of strike and picketing in the district.<sup>325</sup>

### **Civil Disobedience Movement and Jorhat**

A round table conference was organized between the British administration and the leaders of the freedom movement to solve the political problem of India in 1930. In this conference, Chandra Dhar Baruah, a tea planter of Jorhat was invited as a representative leader from India. The Congress people of Jorhat opposed his participation in the round table conference. Students of Assam, which later formed the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, initiated Civil Disobedience movement. During this period the head office of State Congress was shifted from Guwahati to Sivsagar. Due to this movement, the entire Sibsagar district was declared as disturbed area and the imposed restriction on the communication made by the national leaders to the leaders of the different organization and institution in Assam, which supported civil disobedience movement.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 1931, Viceroy Irwin came to Jorhat and an official function was organized to felicitate him in Gymkhana Club situated at Chinamora. Fifty-one selected volunteers of Congresses came out in a procession to protest the visit of Irwin. Viceroy later banned the Congress and dominated many activities initiated by the volunteers of the freedom struggle in Jorhat. There were continuous atrocities of police on Non-violent agitators. To collect revenue from the people to compensate the deficit cause due to great economic depression in the world in 1929, some riots committees were constituted during 1930 to 1936.<sup>326</sup>

On 18<sup>th</sup> April in 1933, a state level convention of people was organized in Jorhat under the Presidentship of Nabin Chandra Bordoloi, Siveswar Bhattacharya and Jadu Nath Saikia were the president and secretary respectively of reception committee of the convention. Around 400 representatives from different parts of Assam representing *Raij Mel* were present in this three-day long conference. In this

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<sup>325</sup>Barpujari, H.K. (1990). *Political History of Assam, Vol. II, 1826-1919*, Guwahati: Publication Division Government of Assam.

<sup>326</sup>Bhuyan, Arun. (1978). *Political History of Assam Vol I & II*. Guwahati: Publication Division Government of Assam, pp. 130-135

conference an association in the name of Sadou Asom Raiot Association was formed. Krishna Nath Sarma and M.V Mahanata were elected as secretary and assistant secretary of this farmer's association. After two years, the first conference of Jorhat district farmer association was held at Karanaga.<sup>327</sup>

According to the opinion of freedom fighter, Sivsagar Bordoli though the main objective of this farmer association was to make development of farmer but it indirectly helped in the freedom struggle. The third conference of this association was held at Potiyagaon of Jorhat where Prof. Tulsi Narayan Sarma was the president. On June 25 to 26<sup>th</sup> of 1931 the first national Level conference of Provincial Congress was held in Jorhat. The nationalist leaders Hariprasad Brahmasari, L.B.S Dalimbaru were the presidents of this conference. Brahmasari resigned the job of Sub deputy collector to join in the freedom struggle. This conference was held in Kachari field in presence of 1000 -1500 people per day. Administration used all its forces to dominate such popular uprisings, which was communicated to Gandhiji by Jorhat Bar Association. This type domination by the administration was a violation of Gandhi Irwin Pact for which Gandhiji decided not to join the Second Round Table Conference.

In the month of June, 1932 the Second National Provincial Conference was held in Jorhat at Bisnuram Baruah Hall under the president ship of Pitambar Deva Goswami. The third national provincial conference was held at Dhekiakhuwa of Jorhat in 1935 and the conference was presided over by Omio Kumar Das. Two more conferences were held, one among those was of Assam Raiot Sabha, which was organized in the same place. A very eminent leader of India, Amrita Kour was also present during the conference for the promotion of Asom Sindhi Bhakha Prasar Sammitte.<sup>328</sup> In a remarkable development in 1938, Asom Yuva Sanga in its Titabor Conference adopted resolutions of total independence, prevention of alcohol and eradication of illiteracy etc. On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1939 the Student Union of Jagannath Barauh College, Jorhat celebrated independence of the country. The union celebrated the day in the next year also but some Muslim Students protested against the hoisting of Congress flag during the celebration.

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<sup>327</sup>Bhuyan, Arun. 1978

<sup>328</sup>Barpujari, H.K. (1990). *Political History of Assam, Vol. II, 1826-1919*, Guwahati: Publication Division Government of Assam.

The 21<sup>st</sup> conference of Asom Satra Sanmilen was held at Jorhat from 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24 April 1939, which was presided over by Prof. Humayun Kabir among other personalities like Kuladhor Chaliha, Nilmoni Phukan, Moni Guha from Bengal, Satyabrata Dutta from Sylhet etc. In this conference many important resolutions were adopted. Among them were association's affiliation to all India Student Union, establishment of agricultural college and university in Assam, establishment of ITI and of girls' high school, etc. This conference expressed solidarity with the labourers of Digboi refinery in their protest against administration. Sayed Abdul Malik who raised objection against the presentation of Vande Mataram during the conference and appeal to remove it from the agenda of the conference held at J.B College Jorhat to remove communal sentiments from the association.<sup>329</sup> In January 1942, the annual conference of Jorhat District Students' Congress was held in Mihiram Saikia High School at Titabor. In this conference, a resolution was adopted not to support British Colonial power in Second World War. It was decided that students would not join the war, which might decrease the strength of freedom struggle. During this conference, the spirit of freedom movement motivated the youths of the area and many of them joined Azad Hind Force. In this period, Indian National Congresses created public opinion against the defence rule of India enacted by British government and Satyagraha was started all over the country. From Assam, 1571 persons joined the Satyagraha on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1941. The second phase of Satyagraha was started at Sivsagar where around 10000 people from various places of Assam participated. One of the most important features of Jorhat was the overwhelming participation of women in the freedom struggle particularly in the Satyagraha. Gandhiji approached a few women from Jorhat to participate in the Satyagraha. Among them were Aaideo Baruah, Debojani Baruah from Teok, Premalata Bharali from Jorhat, Sudhalata Saikia (Dutta) from Charigaon etc. At the time of Second World War, Japan occupied Singapore and Rangoon and started coming towards Assam for which thousands of refugees from Myanmar came to Assam and got shelter in the camps established by the Congress. The tea planters of Jorhat donated a sum of Rs. 1800 to these relief

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<sup>329</sup>Bannerje, A.C. (1992). The New Regime, 1826-31. In Barpujari, H K. *The Comprehensive History of Assam: Modern Period. IV*. Guwahati: Publication Board, Assam. pp. 1-43.

camp.<sup>330</sup> On 22<sup>th</sup> April Jawaharlal Nehru, visited Jorhat to take stock of the refugees' problem. He tried to convince the people that neither Germany nor Japan was better than England for the interest of the Indians. During the Second World War, most of the educational institutions were occupied by the armed forces. In protest of this on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1942, Jorhat District Students' Conference submitted a memorandum to the district administration to remove the armed forces from the institutions to restore normal academic atmosphere. On September 1942, the people of Jorhat joined in the Quit India Movement. Many self-independent states were declared in Jorhat during that period. These states were organized with forces along with other administrative arrangements. In the meantime, another important organization came up in Assam in the name of Asom Jatiya Mahasabha, which organized a meeting at Jorhat on 5<sup>th</sup> Nov 1944. The main objective of the organization was to promote social reforms enacted by M.K Gandhi. The Chairman of Jorhat municipality, Nilmoni Phukan while supporting the agenda of Asom Jatiya Mahasabha (AJM) defined the term 'Assamese' in the following way. He said 'an Assamese is he who is a permanent or temporary resident of Assam and can, speak read and write Assamese'. In this meeting, a resolution was adopted to oppose the allotment of land by the government to the immigrants coming from Mymensingh district of Bangladesh.

Jorhat was the hub of all activities during the freedom struggle. All the people from different communities, particularly Hindu and Muslim lived together in a suitable atmosphere in the district. However, with the growth of the politics of Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha, like other region of the country, the politics of Assam also started changing. A Branch of Muslim League opened in Jorhat under the leadership of Md. Sahdullah and the Muslim League together in support and favour of Pakistan organized a meeting.<sup>331</sup> However, many Muslim leaders opposed the idea and supported India's independence unconditionally. Even the first Doctorate of Assam, Maidul Islam Bora who opposed the incorporation of Assam into Pakistan became the victim of conspiracy by the Muslim League. At last on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1947 a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Nilmoni Phukan in which a resolution was adopted to oppose the role played by all India Congress Committee regarding the

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<sup>330</sup>Ibid., p. 55

<sup>331</sup>Bhuyan, Arun., 1978

grouping of states. Later except Muslim League all the associations like, Jatiya Mahasabha, Satra Sanmilan, Tribal Sangha, Communist Party etc. stood together against the grouping to save Assam from the newly formed Pakistan.

## **4.2 Geography and Demography**

Jorhat district lies between 26.20", 2710.30" north latitude, 93.39", and 94 36.30" east longitudes. The district is bounded on the north by Lakhimpur districts; on the south by the state of Nagaland; on the east by Sivasagar and Dibrugarh district and on the west by Golaghat district. The district has an area of 2851 km<sup>2</sup>. It has an average elevation of 116 meters (381 feet). The rank of district in comparison to other districts in term of area in the State of Assam is 12th. It comprises of 6 Revenue Circle with 848 villages. It has 5 Community Development Blocks. In the district, there are four statutory and seven Census Towns. In the north of the district, the Brahmaputra River forms the largest riverine island of the world. Majuli, which had a total area of 1,250 square kilometers (483 sq. mi), but having lost significantly to erosion it is barely 400 sq. km. The island, threatened by constant erosion by the mighty and unstable Brahmaputra River, had been the principal place of pilgrimage of Vaishnavites since the age of the Ahom rulers. Several Satras (monasteries) resembling those of medieval times are headed by Satradhikars teaching Vaishnavism which Sankardeva (1449–1568) initiated. Each Satra has an unknown wealth of Vaishnav Scriptures and extensive revenue-free lands cultivated by the Bhakats (celebrated monks) of the Satras

**Table 4.1: Jorhat District at a Glance**

<b>Area Sq. K.ms (as per 2011 Census)</b>	<b>Total</b>	2851
	<b>Rural</b>	2772.15
	<b>Urban</b>	78.85
Sub-division		3
No. of Community Development Block		5
Revenue Circles		6
No. of Anchalik Panchayat		8
No. of Gaon Panchayats		110
No. of Villages (as per 2011 Census)		848
No. of Towns (as per 2011 Census)		7
No. of Zila Parishad		1

Source: Census of India, 2011<sup>332</sup>

As per census of 2011, Jorhat had a population of 1,092,256 out of which males constitute 556,805 (51.13 percentage) and females constitute 535,451 (48.87 percentage). In Jorhat out of the total population, 78.88 percentages reside in the rural areas and 20.12 percentages are in the urban areas. Jorhat has an average literacy rate of 83.42 percentages, male literacy is 88.38 per cent and female literacy is 78.22 percentages.

**Table 4.2: Population of State of Assam & Jorhat District**

<b>State/ District</b>	<b>Total Rural Urban</b>	<b>Total population</b>		
		<b>Persons</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Assam</b>	Total	31,20,5576	15,93,9443	1,52,66133
	<b>Rural</b>	26,80,7034	13,67,8989	1,21,28045
	<b>Urban</b>	43,98,742	2,260,454	2,138,088
<b>Jorhat</b>	Total	1,091,295	5,57,944	5,33,351
	<b>Rural</b>	871,730	4,42,968	4,28,754
	<b>Urban</b>	291,565	1,13,837	10,6697

Source: Census of India, 2011

Out of total population of Assam, 14.10% people live in urban regions. The total figure of population living in urban areas is 4398742, of which 2260454 are males and while remaining 2138088 are females. The urban population in the last 10 years has seen an increase by 14.10 percentages. Sex Ratio in urban regions of Assam was

<sup>332</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

946 females per 1000 males. Average literacy rate in Assam for Urban region was 88.47 percentages in which Male were 91.81 percentages while female literacy stood at 79.85 percentages. Total literates in urban areas in Assam were 3492541.<sup>333</sup> Out of the total population of Assam state, around 85.90 percentages live in the villages of rural areas. In actual numbers, males and females were 13678989 and 12128045 respectively. Total population of rural areas of Assam state was 26807034. The population growth rate recorded for this decade (2001-2011) was 85.90 percentages. In rural regions of the state of Assam, female sex ratio per 1000 males was 960. The literacy rate in rural areas for males and female stood at 75.40 percentages and 60.05 percentages. Average literacy rate in Assam for rural areas was 69.34 percentages. Total literates in rural areas were 15685436.<sup>334</sup> The total population of Jorhat District as per Census 2011 is 1092256. Male comprises 556805 while female consists of 535451. Out of the total population of the district, 871722 falls under rural and 220534 are under urban areas of the district. In rural areas 442968 and, 428754 are males and female respectively. Accordingly, 113837 and 106697 are males and females respectively in urban of the district. The percentage of urban population in the district is only 20.19%. So it can be clearly seen that most of the population dwelling the rural areas of the district. The decadal growth rate of the district comes to 9.3. Jorhat is a quite densely populated district. The density of the district is 383 persons per sq. k.m. The district has a Sex Ratio of 962 as against 958 in the State. The literacy rate of Jorhat district is 82.1 % of which 87.6 % is for males and 76.5 % is for females.

### **Religion**

The population of the district is composed of three religions namely the Hinduism, Muslim (Islam) and the Christianity. In addition, the persons belonging to Buddhism, Sikh and Jainism are living in the district.

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<sup>333</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

<sup>334</sup>Census of India, 2011

**Table 4.3: Religion in the District**

Categories	Total	Percentage %
Hindu	10,08,219	92.21%
Muslim	5,46,84	5.01%
Christen	2,10,51	1.97%
Sikh	1,540	0.14%
Buddhist	2,378	0.22%
Jain	719	0.07%
Others	578	0.05%
Not stated	3,087	0.28%

Source: Census of India District Wise Statistical Handbook (Jorhat) 2011<sup>335</sup>

In Jorhat District, the Hindus constitute 92.2 percentages whereas the Muslims constitute 5 percentage of the total population. Rest of the religion occupied less significant place in the demography of the district.

**Hindu:** Hindus were divided into two cults– Sakti worshipper and Vaisnavites. People in the district predominantly practice Vaisnavite culture. They are the followers of Shri Shri Sankardev (1449-1569 AD). Majuli is one of the pioneers of this Vaisnavite culture and religion.

**Muslim:** They constitute a small fraction of the population in the district. People professing Sunni Panth are found in large measure.

**Christian:** They too constitute a small number to the total population in the district. They began their settlement when the East India Company came over to India.

**Table 4.4: The Successive Division of Schedule Caste Population in Jorhat and Assam**

	State		District	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Scheduled Castes Persons	22,31,321	7.15	88,665	4.5 %
Males	11,45,314	7.19	45,194	
Females	1,08,6,007	7.11	43,471	

Source: Census of India District Wise Statistical Handbook (Jorhat) 2011

<sup>335</sup> Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.



Considering the distribution of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) population in the district, we find that there are 88665 SC persons comprising of 45194 males and 43471 females. The percentage of Schedules Castes population to total population is 4.5 percentage.<sup>336</sup>

**Table 4.5: Division of Schedule Tribes Population in Jorhat and Assam**

Caste	State		District	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Scheduled Tribes Persons	3,884,371	12.45	139,971	<b>12.8%</b>
Males	1,957,005	12.28	70,795	
Females	1,927,366	12.63	69,176	

Source: Census of India District Wise Statistical Handbook (Jorhat) 2011

The total Scheduled Tribes population in the district is 139971 comprising of 70795 males and 69176 females. The percentage of ST population to total population in the district is only 12.8 percent. In Jorhat district of Assam, the population is heterogeneous constituting of people from almost all the caste and communities. The above two tables show the distribution of schedule caste and schedule tribe population in the district. Both schedule caste and schedule tribes constitute more than 17percentage of the total population in the district, rest of the population is constituted by the people of general caste including Hindu high caste people, indigenous Muslims and people from the Other Backward Classes.<sup>337</sup>

### **Economic of Jorhat District**

The district of Jorhat is mainly dependent on agriculture and a sizable population, i.e., 46 percentage of the total work force engaged in agriculture. However, majority are engaged in varieties of other activities. Fifty-four percentages (152684 Hector.) of the total geographical area is put to agricultural use.

<sup>336</sup> Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

<sup>337</sup> [http://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_And\\_You/scheduled\\_castes\\_and\\_scheduled\\_tribes.aspx](http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/scheduled_castes_and_scheduled_tribes.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

**Table 4.6: Distribution of Main Workers, Marginal Workers and Non-Workers**

	<b>Population</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Total Workers	498,618	320,746	177,872
Main Workers	338,635	249,021	89,614
Marginal Workers	159,983	71,725	88,258
Non Workers	593,638	236,059	357,579
Cultivators	145,885	94,435	51,450
Agricultural Labours	53,153	24,882	28,271
Household Industries Workers	31,543	12,598	18,945
Other Workers	268,037	188,831	79,206

Source: Census of India District Wise Statistical Handbook (Jorhat) 2011<sup>338</sup>

Tea is an important cash crop for which Jorhat district is known worldwide. The district has 135 numbers of tea gardens and produces at an average of 82 million kg of tea per annum.

In the trading sector also considerable progress has been achieved due to its direct connection with Delhi, Kolkata and many other capital cities of the country by air. Jorhat is also connected with various others locations by waterways through its river ports at Nimati. The main items of imports to the district are pulses, mustard oil, tobacco, cement, textile, chemicals, drugs and all kinds of consumer products. The items of export are tea, jute, forest produce, oil, cake, etc.

The district has a number of small scale and cottage industries in the field of cane work and bamboo work, silver jewelry, furniture making, brass smithy, umbrella making, soap manufacturing to name a few. As per Census of India, 2011, the economic characteristics of the people in the study area exhibited 40.19 percentage of total working population, which is little, lower than that of the district i.e. 45.65 per cent. Non-working population of the study area is 54.35 percentages.

#### **Academic atmosphere: Educational and Medical Facilities**

According to the Charter of 1813, the responsibility of education in India was handed over the East India Company Govt. The modern education system in India was started after this period. In 1854, Woods Educational Dispatch had given valuable

<sup>338</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

suggestions for the development of education in India; accordingly, various reformations were made in the field of education in India. In 1882, the first Indian Education Commission or Hunter Commission was appointed under the British Government for expansion of education, particularly primary education in India.<sup>339</sup>

According to the Hunter Commission report, the local bodies have the responsibility to establish schools in their areas. As such there was expansion of education all over India including Jorhat district. In 1902, Lord Curzon made some reformations for qualitative development of education in India, the impact of these acts and reforms influence the process and development of education in Assam including Jorhat district.<sup>340</sup> King George the 5<sup>th</sup> of England came to India in December 1911. In his honour, Upendra Nath Baruah established George Seminary High School at Jorhat in 1912. In 1938, the school was renamed as Sankardev Seminary High School. The year 1912 can be marked as the year of expansion of education at Jorhat. Besides these above-mentioned schools, several High Schools and primary schools were established at Jorhat in the pre-independence period. The present Jorhat Boys Higher Secondary and Multipurpose school is one of the few old high schools of Assam.<sup>341</sup>

It has crossed hundred years more than a decade back. Jorhat Normal School is the oldest teacher's education school of the state, which was established in 1906. On 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1927 Prince of Wales Institute of Engineering and Technology was established. The Governor of Assam opened the Institute on 16th January 1928. At that time Mechanical Apprentice course, woodwork, higher motor mechanic, two-year diploma courses were introduced. In 1957, three years' diploma courses in various Engineering courses introduced on all India pattern. During the Second World War, (1937-1945) technical Institute was established. After independence in 1947, this institute was upgraded to an Industrial Training Institute introducing various courses in Technical and Vocational streams under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.<sup>342</sup> In 1930, Jagannath Baruah College was established in the hallowed memory of late Jagannath Baruah, a leading citizen of that time and who is known as

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<sup>339</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/102629/11/11\\_chapter%203.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/102629/11/11_chapter%203.pdf) [accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>340</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/67673/10/10\\_chapter%205.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/67673/10/10_chapter%205.pdf) [03/01/18]

<sup>341</sup>Ibid. p.19

<sup>342</sup>Ibid. p. 20

B.A., Jagannath, in his own building and campus, is the first non-government college in Assam. This college has been offering courses for Arts, Science and Commerce at degree level.

Today in these college post-graduate classes has been opened in different subjects in Arts and Commerce. Noted scholar and founder Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University Late Krishna Kanta Handique was the founder Principal of J.B. College. Several renowned educationists of the years were also founder teachers of this college. This college has produced a good number of administrators, technicians, sports persons, businessperson and social workers. The Devi Charan Baruah Girls College was established in 1955, and it is the only women's college at Jorhat with Arts and Science faculty. Jorhat College was established in 1964. Chandrakamal Bezbaruah Commerce College was established in 1965.<sup>343</sup> At present, this college is teaching all the subjects of Commerce faculty along with Computer and Technology. Besides, there are several colleges established in the district to cater to the needs of the higher education for boys and girls. Music school was established in pre-independence era at the initiative of Darpa Nath Sarma, a great musician of Jorhat. In 1931 Telegraph and Commercial Institute was established with vocational subjects. Homeopathic College was established in 1975 and it was named in 1985 after Dr. Jiba Kanta Saikia, the first Assamese Director of Health Services. The Science College was established in 1964 and in the same year, the Jorhat Law College was established. Assam Agricultural University was established in 1969. The State Institute of Education was established under the Directorate of Education, Government of Assam in the year 1964 for the expansion of education and better management and training. In 1974, the Blind School was established for teaching the blind students. The Prerona School for educating the specially abled children was established at Jorhat in 1992; Fine Arts school was established in 1977.<sup>344</sup>

The Government Post-Graduate Training College was established in 1957 for training of the teachers of secondary schools. It was formerly under Gauhati University at present it is under Dibrugarh University. The College of Teachers education was

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<sup>343</sup>Ibid. p. 25

<sup>344</sup>[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/67673/10/10\\_chapter%205.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/67673/10/10_chapter%205.pdf)

[Accessed 03/01/18]

established in 1991 for providing B.Ed. Course. The Sarudoï Saikia Women's College of Education was established in 1994. This college is exclusively for women and it is the first women's B.Ed. College in Assam. Bapa Ram Saikia Institute of Child Development and Training was established in 1986 and it introduces pre-primary teacher's training diploma course. At present it is the only institute for giving education in pre-primary Montessori Teachers Training diploma course in Assam. Kanak Nath Dutta Saikia Institute of Education established in 1986 gives intensive training course in Crèche Attendants Primary Teachers and Voluntary Workers. It also gives academic training to the dropout and under privileged students. The general education agricultural education technical education women education, child education has expanded at Jorhat over the past two decades. A few institutes of the state of Assam also surround Jorhat. These are Regional Research Laboratory and Tocklai Tea Research Station established in 1911.

There is also a Coal Research Centre in the town. Jorhat is also a well-known cultural centre. There are a few halls and stages for theatrical programmers and other cultural activities. In the sphere of language and literature, also Jorhat is unique and famous. The head Office of the Assam Sahitya Sabha named Chandra Kanta Handique is located at Jorhat town. Some renowned litterateurs and poets were born in Jorhat. Next to Guwahati, Jorhat stand second in respect of media provision. The Janambhumi press of Jorhat publishes three newspapers, the *Dainik Janambhumi*, and the *Janambhumi weekly* in Assamese and the *Eastern Clarion* in English, Jorhat is the most literate district of Assam. Jorhat is considered as the suitable place for ethical modern education values. In all the assembly segments, a good number of schools and colleges are present. More than twenty-five colleges of repute and hundreds of schools belonging to different stages that caters to different linguistics groups, like Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Nepali and others.

### **Social Situation**

Montesquieu, in his book *The Spirit of Laws (II)*, states that in the case of elections in either a republic or a democracy, voters alternate between being the rulers of the country and being the subjects of the government. By the act of voting, the people

operate in a sovereign (or ruling) capacity, acting as "masters" to select their governments.<sup>345</sup>

Understanding of the social situations prevailing in a given electoral unit is crucial for analysis of its electoral politics. In a vast country like India, social, cultural and economic situations vary from region to region, from community to community. Within the same area or community, economic and social class variations are quite significant. In reality, the major sociological factors that affect voting include social class, income, occupation, education, religion, ethnic background, primary groups, geography, sex and age.

Multi-ethnic composition of population is one of the distinguishing features of Jorhat District. In contemporary times, electoral politics of any region or polity is influenced by ethnic issues; along with other demographic and social, political and economic forces and factors. The social situation of Jorhat reflects the general multi-ethnic characteristics of the social fabric of Assam. Numerous communities of Assam are divided along different lines of ethnicity, language, religion and such other criteria. Anthropologists like Dr. B.M Das and others have classified the population of Assam into two broad groups: tribal (of hills and plains) and non-tribal Assamese society by virtue of its geo-politic, historical and ethnic linkages seem to exhibit certain distinctive characteristics when compared with the rest of the nation. At present, Assamese Hindus constitute the bulk of the indigenous population in Assam. Various tribal communities living in hills and also in plains are at different levels of acculturation, integration and assimilation. "The local Muslim population is also sizeable in proportion and their place in and contribution to the composite socio-cultural milieu is quite significant and considerable"<sup>346</sup> while there is a small proportion of people particularly the tribal groups who have adopted and become followers of the significant Assamese Sikh community and Christianity. During the colonial period, one can observe the crystallization of a new community namely the Tea Garden Community. These categories of people are the different labourers brought in by the colonial tea planters (British) as indentured labourers from the

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<sup>345</sup> Montesquieu, Charles de Second at, baron de, 1689-1755. (1823). The spirit of laws. London: Printed for J. Collingwood,

<sup>346</sup> [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/33043/13/13\\_chapter%203.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/33043/13/13_chapter%203.pdf) [Accessed 03/01/18]

Chhota Nagpur Plateau region. The Tea-tribes are found mainly in the districts of Darrang, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj Tinsukia and almost all the districts of Assam.<sup>347</sup> These are one of the backward and most exploited tribes in India, though newer generation are comparatively educated having intellectuals and professionals in various fields. The Tea tribes, being labourers, live in villages, inside tea-estates (established by tea-planters). These estates are located in interior places and this contributes to the backwardness and exploitation of them by the tea-planters. The workers, in a way have to live with the basic facilities provided by the tea-planters.

Violence and agitation of labourers against the management is common, where the State machinery normally protects the tea-planters. Lack of adequate education, poverty, addiction of males to country-beer, poor standard of living and poor health facilities are the problems in their life. There are instances when tea-planters do not even supply the life-saving drugs when workers are dying out of epidemics. The 'welfare officer' appointed in every tea-estate due to compulsion from Government of India, are mostly showpieces than of any good.<sup>348</sup>

During the Colonial period, establishment of Assam Tea Company in 1834 in order to colonising waste land in Assam to provide new avenues of investment for foreign capital. The industry required a regular supply of labour and attracted a large number of labourers from Bihar, Chotanagpur, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa and beyond. Thousands of labourers annually recruited for the plantations from all the above regions hardly returned home thus forming an important segment of Assam's population. Demographically, tea garden labourer community of Assam represents around 20 percentage of the total population of the state accounting more than 45 lakhs tea garden labour population in the state and is one of the biggest contributors to the organized workforce as well as to the economy of Assam.

Further, of the total working population the main working population comprises about 67.90 per cent whereas marginal working population covers about 32.09 percentage. The composition scenario of the total main working population showed that the other

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<sup>347</sup>Ibid. p. 22

<sup>348</sup>Guha, Amalendu., 1978

workers, which are about 86.11 per cent, cover the highest proportion. The proportions of cultivators (5.75 per cent), household industries (4.51 per cent) and the lowest proportion of agricultural labourers (3.63 per cent) are presented in Table 4.8.<sup>349</sup> The trend of proportions of the marginal working population shows that it is highest in case of its other workers (62.86 per cent) and recorded more or less similar proportions in case of its household industries (12.87 per cent); cultivator (12.20 per cent) and agriculture labourers (12.07 per cent).

While making a comparison of the economic characteristics of the people in the study area and that of the district, striking differences have been observed in their proportions of the other workers and cultivators of the main working as well as marginal working population. With regard to the main working population, the proportion of other workers and cultivators are 86.11 per cent and 5.75 per cent respectively in the study area, they are 60.64 per cent and 29.14 per cent in the district level. This difference is quite high in case of the other workers in the marginal working population also, which is 62.86 per cent in the study area and 39.18 per cent in the district. These differences are mainly attributed to the fact that the study area comprises the Jorhat town, the major urban hub of the district and its surrounding areas with more or less the characteristics of an urban area. This is the area where people are involved in trade, commerce, business, transport, banking, construction, factory etc. apart from services of government organizations, municipality, educational institute, entertainment, and so on.<sup>350</sup>

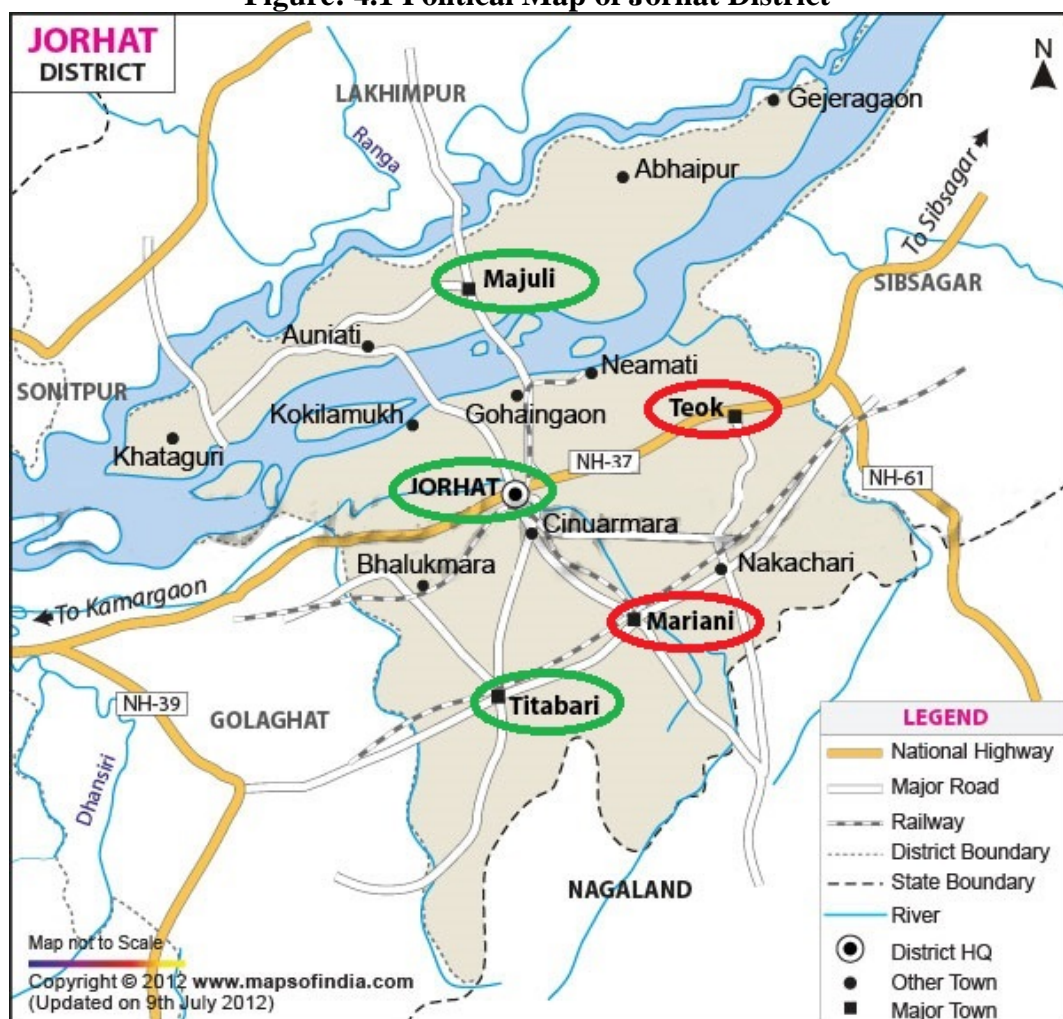
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<sup>349</sup>Census of India, 2011

<sup>350</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.(URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]



**Figure: 4.1 Political Map of Jorhat District**



Source: www.mapsofindia.com

### **4.3 Electoral Politics of Assembly Election in Jorhat District: Constituency wise analyses:**

There are five legislative assembly constituencies in Jorhat District out of which only Titabor and Teok were created in 1951. Among rest of the constituencies Majuli and Jorhat were created in 1962 and Mariani was created in 1967. The trends of political participation of all these five constituencies are shown below to make a comparative analysis.

#### **Mariani Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC)**

Mariani is a small town located in Jorhat district of Assam. It is about 17.5 km from Jorhat Railway station. Mariani shares border with the state of Nagaland. As per 2011 census, Mariani had a population of 131613.

Males constitute 54% of the population and females 46%. Mariani has a cosmopolitan culture with many communities speaking different languages and living in harmony for decades.<sup>351</sup> Mariani is well connected by air. Nearest airport is located at Jorhat. It is also well connected with the rest of the country for it is an important railway junction. Dhodar Ali connects Mariani by road. Mariani constituency was created in the year 1967 with 41466 voters prior to the general election held in that year.<sup>352</sup> As stated earlier, Mariani is a trade centre and also a tea garden area. As a result, tea garden voters dominate the Mariani politics. Most of the contesting candidates in this constituency thus come from tea garden community.

**Table 4.7: Total Electors and Vote Polled 1967-2016**

Year of Election	Total Electors			Total who voted			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total*	Male	Female	Total	
1967	N/A	N/A	41466	N/A	N/A	22514	54.30%
1972	N/A	N/A	46900	N/A	N/A	25969	55.37%
1978	30163	24970	55133	21358	15762	37120	67.33%
1983	31506	26687	58193	4430	3576	8006	13.76%
1985	34134	30608	64742	24419	20549	44968	69.46%
1991	41008	35438	76446	29366	23578	52944	69.26%
1996	44593	40569	85162	33459	27023	60482	70.02%
2001	47659	43707	91366	34432	29242	63674	69.69%
2006	53246	51073	104319	39257	37832	77089	73.91%
2011	52764	51519	104283	39019	37130	76180	73.05%
2016	54156	52559	106715	45268	45263	90581	84.88%

Source: Election Commission of India, Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1967-2016.<sup>353</sup>

The above table (4.9) shows the growth of electors in Mariani constituency. The constituency shows a natural growth of voters which fluctuates between 5percentage and 18 percentages. The lowest growth could be observed in the 1983 election (05.55%) while the highest growth (18.08%) could be observed during 1991 election. Since the year of its creation, the electors in this constituency increased more than two

<sup>351</sup>Census of India., 2011

<sup>352</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1967, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>353</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

and a half folds from 41466 in 1951 to 106715 in 2016.<sup>354</sup> As regards the casting of votes, the table shows that leaving aside the exceptional year i.e. 1983, in all other elections polling percentage was more than 50. In fact, in majority of elections vote polled was more than 60 percentages. Highest votes were polled in the election of 2016, which is 84.88 percentages.<sup>355</sup> In the table below the details of winners and runners up candidates of Mariani constituency is presented. The constituency has been the bastion of Congress since its creation. Out of the 11 general elections, Congress won the seat ten times. Only in 1985, during the AGP wave, it was won by an AGP candidate, Naren Tanti who hailed from a tea tribe community. It may be observed that people in the constituency had also made an effort to cast vote in favour of the candidates having good images who fought election independently.

**Table 4.8: Election results of Mariani Constituency since 1967**

Year of Election	Winning candidate-1			Runner up		
	Name	Party	Vote's polled	Name	Party	Vote's polled
1967	J Tanti	INC	9924	SP Sing	IND	4467
1972	Gajen Tanti	INC	17949	Jisan Mipun	IND	5682
1978	Gajen Tanti	INC	12259	Purna Kanta Phukan	IND	8779
1983	Siba Buragohain	INC	4953	Gajen Tanti	ICS	2503
<b>1985</b>	<b>Naren Tanti</b>	<b>AGP</b>	<b>19809</b>	<b>Siba Buragoahia</b>	<b>INC</b>	<b>9806</b>
1991	Rupam Kurmi	INC	21508	Dineswar Tasa	AGP	5677
1996	Rupam Kurmi	INC	26566	Bhaba Prasad Bora	AGP	21150
2001	Rupam Kurmi	INC	23010	Binod Gogoi	BJP	20177
2006	Rupjyoti Kurmi	INC	33471	Alok Kumar Ghosh	NCP	30454
2011	Rupjyoti Kurmi	INC	35754	Alok Kumar Ghosh	NCP	28696
2016	Rupjyoti Kurmi	INC	36701	Alok Kumar Ghosh	NCP	34908

Source: Election Commission of India Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1967-2016.<sup>356</sup>

It has already been discussed that the constituency is very much dependent on the tea garden voters. The garden community is very much aware of their valuable votes and

<sup>354</sup>Election Commission of India, Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1967-2016, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>355</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1983 and 2016, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India.

<sup>356</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

therefore during the time of electioneering they attempt to extract as much benefits as they can from the politicians. However, usually they vote in blocks. The politicians from among the garden community are also active and they have been contesting the election right from the beginning. In fact, all the winning candidates so far are belonging to tea garden community except for once and that is in 1983.<sup>357</sup> However, in most of the elections in Mariani Constituency Congress became the winner but the margin with the runner's up candidates remained very narrow particularly from the 1996 election. In 1967 election, INC candidate J. Tanti won the election with 99924 votes where independent candidates got only S.P Singh got 4467 votes. There was a difference of 5457 votes. In the second assembly election held in 1972 INC candidates, Gajen Tanti won the election with 17949 votes with a margin of 12267 votes to his opponent independent candidate Jisang Mipun. In 1978, again congress candidate J. Tanti was elected 3480 votes to his immediate opponent independent candidate Purnakanta Phukan. In 1983 election, Siva Buragohain of INC was elected with 4953 votes and runners up candidates from Indian Congress (Socialist) got 2503 votes. It was not a normal election in the electoral history of Assam as many organisations boycotted this poll and the law and situation was not normal in the state. Only on this occasion Siba Buragohain, a candidate from other than Tea Tribe Community won the election in the constituency. In 1985, the political scenario of Assam was changed due to the emergence of regional party Asom Gana Parisad (AGP). This party also put up Naren Tanti, a candidate from Tea Tribe community who won the election with 19809 votes living behind INC candidates Siva Buragohain with 9806 votes.

In 1991 election, INC offered candidature to female candidate Rupam Kurmi who was popular among the Tea tribes' voters for her social works to bring welfare to this community. Rupam Kurmi was elected with 21508 living behind the AGP candidate Deneswar Tasa with a margin of 15831 votes. This was the highest margin that a candidate won from Mariani constituency. In 1996, Rupam Kurmi being the candidate of INC got 26566 votes and the runner up candidate from AGP, Bhaba Prasad Bora received 21150 votes. The margin was only 5416 votes. In 2001 INC candidates,

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<sup>357</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1983*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

Rupam Kurmi again won the election with 23010 votes and runner's up candidates Binod Gogoi from BJP got 20177 votes. This time the difference was only of 2833 votes. For the first time Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) made an entry to this constituency and backed by more than 20000 votes which is quite significant. In 2006, INC put up Rupjyoti Kurmi, Son of Rupam Kurmi as its candidates who won the election with 33471 votes living behind his immediate opponent Alok Kumar Gosh from Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), who got 30454 votes and lost the battle with a margin of 3017 votes. In 2011, INC again put Rupjyoti Kurmi as its candidates who won the election with 35754 votes and Alok Kumar Gosh from NCP got 28696 votes remain in the second position with a margin of 7058 votes. In 2016 assembly election in Mariani INC offered candidature to Rupjyoti Kurmi for third consecutive term who won the election with 36701 votes. Alok Kumar Gosh, the NCP candidates received 34908 votes and remain in the second position with a lowest ever margin of 1793 votes in Mariani constituency.<sup>358</sup> It is seen that though INC could win all the election except only in 1985 but the vote share has been gradually declining in respect of the party particularly from 1996 assembly election. On the other hand, AGP, BJP and NCP have been able to make strong holds in the constituency.<sup>359</sup> The following table shows the number of candidates contesting the elections from Mariani Constituency giving Gender-wise break-up.

**Table 4.9: Voters Turnout in the Mariani 1967-2016**

Year	Total Electors	Polling Percentage (%)	1996	85162	71.02%
1967	41466	54.30%	2001	91366	69.69%
1972	46900	55.30%	2006	104319	73.91%
1978	55133	67.33%	2011	104283	73.05%
1983	58193	13.76%	2016	106715	84.88%
1985	64742	69.46%	1996	85162	71.02%
1991	70466	69.26%	1996	85162	71.02%

Source: Election Commission of India Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1967-2016.<sup>360</sup>

<sup>358</sup>Election Commission of India, *Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1967-2016*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>359</sup>Election Commission of India, *Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1985-1996*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>360</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

The Table shows the percentage of voter's participation in the elections of Mariani constituency. It has been noticed that since the creation of the constituency in 1967 there has been continuous growth of electoral participation in different assembly election up to 2016. In 1983, there was unusual decline of participation to 13.76 percentages due to socio political condition of that time. However, it is observed that this percentage is much higher than the percentage of participation in other LACs of the district in that particular year. It was 2.01 percentages in Teok, 2.49 percentages in Titabor and 1.84 percentage in Jorhat. The election could not have held in Majuli in that year.<sup>361</sup>

**Table 4.10: Gender-wise Break-up of Candidates of Mariani Constituency Since 1967**

Year of election	No of candidates			Year of Election	No of candidates		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
1967	6	0	6	2006	5	0	5
1972	3	0	3	2011	6	0	6
1978	6	1	7	2016	5	0	5
1983	2	0	2				
1985	7	0	7				
1991	15	1	16				

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>362</sup>

The highest number of candidates contested in the year 1991 i.e. 16.<sup>363</sup> The position of women in respect of direct political participation is better in this constituency than the others. The first woman candidate who contested the election was Smti Rupam Kurmi as a Congress (I) candidate in 1978 assembly election. She managed to get 9.04 percentage votes and occupied the 4<sup>th</sup> position. The congress (Sarat Sinha faction) won that election. She again contested the election in 1991 and won the election by a big margin. She received 44 percentage votes while her immediate opponent got only 11.57 percentage of the total votes cast. She was re-elected in the next two elections also i.e. in 1996 and 2001. In 1996 and 2001 another woman

<sup>361</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1983 and 2016*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India

<sup>362</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>363</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1991*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

candidate, namely Smti Mamoni Rajkumari contested the elections but could not get not even one percentage of the total votes polled (table 4.12).

### **Teok Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC)**

The Teok constituency is located towards east of Jorhat district at a distance of 25 Km from Jorhat town and it is the only town of the constituency which is well connected from Jorhat, Sivasagar and Guwahati. Population of the constituency mainly consists of tea tribes and plain tribes like Mishing apart from people belonging to general castes.<sup>364</sup> Teok Circle of Jorhat district has total population of 184611 as per the Census 2011. Out of which 93319 are males while 91292 are females. The Average Sex Ratio of Teok is 978. The Sex Ratio of Urban areas in Teok Circle is 950 while that of rural areas is 980.

As per the Census in 2011 out of total population, 4.8% people live in urban areas while 95.2% live in the rural areas. The average literacy rate in urban areas is 92.1 percentages while that in the rural areas is 80.6 percentages. According to 2016 assembly election data, there are 118981 electors in the constituency.<sup>365</sup> The Teok Legislative Assembly Constituency is one of the original constituencies in Jorhat District. Electoral politics of the constituency shows a mixed trend. Although in majority of elections the Congress party was dominant followed by the regional party, AGP but there were presence of CPI and Janata party also. Once it was a potential area for left politics. Still there are a remarkable number of supporters of left ideology without strong leadership. On the other hand, Teok has a diversified demographic composition ranging from Upper caste Brahmins, Kayasthas, OBC, MOBC, Tea garden workers, Gorias, Morias, STs, and SCs etc. In spite of all these ethnological diversities almost all the people cutting across all castes, communities and religion, socio-political and ideological differences join their hands to celebrate the festivals like Birth and Death anniversaries of Srimanta Sankar Dev and Sri Sri Madhav Dev. It gives a very interesting Socio-Political situation in the Teok Constituency.<sup>366</sup> In the first general election in 1951, the constituency had electorate to the strength of 52193.

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<sup>364</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

<sup>365</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/archiveofge2016/09-CONSTITUENCY%20DATA%20-%20SUMMARY.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/archiveofge2016/09-CONSTITUENCY%20DATA%20-%20SUMMARY.pdf) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>366</sup>Census of India., 2011

The constituency was later re-adjusted against few other adjacent new constituencies came up until the year 1967 belonging to other adjacent districts. The strength of electorate thus presents a fluctuating trend until 1967. The details are shown in the table below.

**Table 4.11: Teok Constituency: Electors and Votes Cast 1951-2016**

Year of Election	Total Electors			Total who voted			Percent age
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1951	N/A	N/A	52193	N/A	N/A	23691	45.39%
1956	N/A	N/A	42803	N/A	N/A	20704	48.37%
1962	N/A	N/A	45097	N/A	N/A	21727	48.18%
1967	N/A	N/A	43239	N/A	N/A	24181	55.92%
1972	N/A	N/A	49480	N/A	N/A	28203	57.00%
1978	34748	28825	63573	23443	16586	40029	62.97%
1983	36959	31432	68391	913	461	1374	02.01%
1985	34929	31372	66301	27072	23451	50523	76.20%
1991	42947	37726	80673	28371	23794	52165	64.66%
1996	45519	42522	88041	34107	29442	63549	72.18%
2001	50838	46283	97121	37235	32878	70113	72.19%
2006	55723	54558	110281	42617	41074	83691	76.00%
2011	56433	56779	113212	41480	38662	80287	70.92%
2016	61073	57908	118981	48602	47008	95903	80.60%

\*N/A = Not Available

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>367</sup>

There was a fall in numbers of electorates in 1956 while a marginal rise in 1962 and then again a fall in 1967. This mixed trend however converted to a steady rise since 1967. One important aspect worth noting here is the rise of female voters. In 1978 election female's share in total numbers of electorates was 45.34 percentage, which however rose to 49.47 percentage in 2006 elections implying a near perfect balance between male and female voters (Table 4.13).

As regards people casting votes in the Teok constituency, it may be observed that people's participation in casting of votes is significant. Excluding the year of exceptional elections (1983) in all other elections, people had cast their votes enthusiastically. The lowest percentage of votes cast was 45.39 in the first general

<sup>367</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]



election while the highest was 80.60 in 2016. It is observed that there was a mixed trend in the growth of electorates who had casted their votes in the elections. In case of growth, it was not steadily rising rather the rate of growth was fluctuating – sometimes falling and sometimes rising.<sup>368</sup>

**Table 4.12: Election results of Teok Constituency since 1951**

Year of election	Winning candidate-1			Runner up		
	Name	Party	Vote polled	Name	Party	Vote polled
1951	Hari Naryan Barua	INC	13046	Sonaram Chutia		5497
1956	Hari Narayan Barua	INC	10880	Sonaram Chutia		5324
1962	Tilak Gogoi	INC	9579	Sonaram Chutia	PSP	5329
1967	Tilak Gogoi	INC	8219	S.N Bharali	IND	4445
1972	Dulal Ch Khaound	CPI	13748	Tilak Gogoi	INC	11770
1978	Devnanda Bora	JNP	12502	B.K Handique	INC	10157
1983	Tilak Gogoi	INC	1253	Umesh Sarma	IND	88
1985	Lalit Chandra Rajkhuwa	IND (AGP)	37236	Dibyalata Gogoi	INC	11025
1991	Renupama Rajkhuwa	AGP	15773	Membar Gogoi	INC	14223
1996	Renupama Rajkhuwa	AGP	32304	Membar Gogoi	INC	26764
2001	Membar Gogoi	INC	34462	Renupama Rajkhuwa	AGP	18628
2006	Membar Gogoi	INC	39219	Renupama Rajkhuwa	AGP	34787
2011	Membar Gogoi	INC	48117	Hemanta Kalita	AGP	17784
2016	Renupoma Rajkhowa	AGP	40928	Pallabi Saikia Gogoi	INC	35879

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016<sup>369</sup>.

The above table shows that Congress has a strong bastion in Teok constituency. Out of the 14 general elections held in this constituency, Congress won the seat for 8 times and got the second position for five times. AGP won the seat thrice consecutively since 1985. Lalit Chandra Rajkhuwa – a student leader-turned-politician won the seat in 1985; but after his demise, his widow who won twice. CPI won the seat in 1972 and Janata Party won it 1978 elections.

<sup>368</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1983 and 2016, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>369</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

In 1951 the first general election to the legislative assembly was held in Teok where Hari Narayan Baruah, a freedom fighter and a social worker, was the candidate from INC he won the then seat with 13046 votes living behind Sonaram Chutiya who was an independent candidate remained in the second position with 5497 votes. In 1956 election, again Hari Narayan Baruah from INC won the seat with 10880 votes living behind his immediate opponent Sonaram Chutiya with 5324 votes. In 1962, INC offered candidature to Tilak Gogoi who won the seat by 9579 votes against his opponents Sonaram Chutiya who was given candidature by Praja Socialist Party (PSP), who got 5329 votes. In 1967 Tilak Gogoi became the candidate of INC for second consecutive term won the seats with 8219 votes. In this election, the independent candidate S.N Bharali got the second position with 4445 votes. It is observed that from the first general election there had been a gradual decline in number of vote polled in favour of INC up to 1967 election.<sup>370</sup>

It has already been stated that there are a number of voters who support the left ideology in this constituency but due to lack of strong leadership, left parties particularly CPI could not catch hold the situation. But in 1972 for the first time in electoral history of the constituency a CPI candidate, Dulal Khaund won the election with 13748 votes living behind his immediate opponent Tilak Gogoi from INC with 11770 votes. Subsequently the political situation of the constituency was changed with the influence of Janata Wave throughout the country, after then national emergency imposed by the then Congress-led government in 1975. In 1978 election Devananda Bora a candidate put up by Janata Party won the election with 12502 votes against his immediate opponent Bijoy Krishna Handique from INC who got 10157 votes. 1983 assembly election in Teok constituency was quite insignificant in terms of voting percentage only 2.01 percentages of votes was polled in this election. Tilak Gogoi the INC candidate won the election with only 1253 votes against an independent candidate Umesh Sarma who got only 88 votes.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>370</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1967 and 2016, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>371</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1983, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

With formation of AGP after Assam agitation Lalit Chandra Rajkhuwa became a popular candidate put up by the regional party as independent who won the election with highest ever votes in the constituency up to that year. Dibyalata Gogoi the widow of Tilak Gogoi was the candidate from INC got only 11025 votes. After the demise of Lalit Chandra Rajkhuwa his wife Renupama Rajkhuwa was a popular choice of AGP which offered candidature to her as a mark of love and respect to their popular leader Lalit Chandra Rajkhuwa. Renupama Rajkhuwa could retain the seat in two consecutive term defeating her opponent Membar Gogoi from INC in 1991 and 1996 elections respectively. Starting 2001, AGP has loss the seat continuously up to 2011 elections. Membar Gogoi, a candidate from INC, won the election consecutively for 3 terms. AGP remained in the second position in 2001, 2006 and 2011 elections.

In 2016 due to the alliance between AGP and BJP, the later led the seat for the former. AGP put up Renupama Rajkhuwa as its candidates who won the election with 40928 votes defeating her nearest candidate Pallabi Saikia Gogoi, the daughter-in-law Membar Gogoi from INC. The defeated candidate got 35879 votes. It is observed that the politics of the constituency does not show any continuous trend throughout the election rather it is mixed and complicated. It is because of diverse population structure and variety of issues and political ideologies present in the constituency.

The OBC voters in the constituency influence the politics largely. The presence of Tea Tribes voters was also another factor, which influence the elections. There are a sizable number of Muslim voters who backed congress in different occasion. It is seen that to win the election battle congress put up OBC candidate in all 14-assembly election held so far in Teok. Out of these, the party won in 8 elections and remained in second position in 6 elections. On the other hand, other parties put up candidates from general caste who could win in 6 elections out of 14. In all these elections there were some special factors which determine the trend of election. In 1978, it was because of all India wave against Congress Party for its policies and decisions.

In 1985, it was because of the emergence of AGP, which determine the political trend of the state as a whole. In 1991 and 1996, AGP won the election in the constituency because of the sympathy votes casted for the AGP candidate Renupama Rajkhuwa who became widow because of accidental death of her husband Lalit Chnadra

Rajkhuwa who was a very popular leader not only in the constituency but also in the state. In 2016 AGP won the election because of anti-incumbency factor, BJP's support to the AGP candidate in the constituency and all India wave against the incumbent government for its mis-governance, corruption and non-development. Moreover, like other constituencies the Modi wave influenced the voters of Teok largely in this election. The Congress party has been playing a very intelligent role in the politics of Teok constituency they usually put up OBC candidate in the election to get support of the OBC voters who are larger in number. The party experience that the OBC voters usually caste there in favour of the candidate of their community. Without wasting time to motivate OBC voters they concentrate more on Muslim and Tea Tribes voters in favour of the party.

In this way Congress has strategically won most of the election in the constituency. In the table below presented the election wise numbers of candidates who were in fray.

**Table 4.13: Voters Turnout in the Teok Legislative Assembly Constituency 1951-2016**

Year	Total Electors	Voting Percentage %	Wining Party
1951	46974	48.37%	INC
1957	42803	48.37%	INC
1962	45097	48.18%	INC
1967	43239	55.92%	INC
1972	25796	57.00%	CPI
1978	63573	62.97%	JNP
1983	68391	2.01%	INC
1985	66301	76.20%	IND
1991	80673	64.66%	AGP
1996	88041	72.18%	AGP
2001	97121	72.19%	INC
2006	110281	76.00%	INC
2011	113212	70.92%	INC
2016	118981	80.60%	AGP

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>372</sup>

<sup>372</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

The table contains the data of voting percentage in the Teok legislative assembly constituency (LAC) of Jorhat district since 1951-2016. Teok is one of the original constituencies, which were created when election was held since 1951 along with Titabor LAC. In this constituency, there has been steady growth in participation of voters in election except in the 1983 election when the participation came down to 2.01 percentage. From 1985, this participation had been gradually increasing and highest being 80.60 percentage in 2016 assembly election.

**Table 4.14: Gender-wise Break-up of Candidates of Teok Constituency 1951-2016**

Year of election	No of candidates			Year of Election	No of candidates		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
1951	4	0	4	1985	6	1	7
1956	3	0	3	1991	19	1	20
1962	6	0	6	1996	7	1	8
1967	10	0	10	2001	5	1	6
1972	3	0	3	2006	4	2	6
1978	15	0	15	2011	4	2	6
1983	2	0	2	2016	8	3	11

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>373</sup>

It may be observed from the table above that the first women candidate contested the election from Teok constituency was in 1985. Smti Dibyalata Gogoi from Congress contested the election and acquired second position obtaining 26.36 per cent of votes. Thereafter Smti Renupama Rajkhuwa contested the seat till 2016 except in 2011. She won the seat thrice and became the second position holder twice.<sup>374</sup>

### **Majuli Legislative Assembly Constituency**

Majuli is a large river island in the Brahmaputra River. It is known as the largest river island in the world. Majuli had a total area of 1,250 square kilometers, but having lost significantly to erosion, it has an area of only 421.65 square kilometers, as per facts available in 2011.<sup>375</sup>

<sup>373</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>374</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1983, 1985, 2011 and 2016*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>375</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

The island is about 200 kilometres east from the state's largest city — Guwahati and is accessible by ferries from the town of Jorhat. The island was formed due to course changes by the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, mainly the Lohit. Majuli is also the abode of the Assamese neo-Vaisnavite culture. The population of Majuli comprises the tribals, nontribal and the scheduled castes. The tribal communities include the Misings, the Deoris and the Sonowal Kacharis. The scheduled castes include the Kaivartas, Brittia Baniases etc. The non-tribal communities include Koch, Kalitas, Ahoms, Chutias, Keot and Yogis etc. The Mising community has the largest dwellers of Majuli. People belonging to Mishing tribes originally immigrated from Arunachal Pradesh centuries ago. Apart from them, the inhabitants are also from the Deori and Sonowal Kachari tribes. Languages spoken here are Mishing Assamese and Deori. The island has a population of 167304 and a density of 300 individuals per square km. The only mode of association to the outside world is through ferry services. Despite inherent drawbacks, modernism has touched this island, with the setting up of medical centres and educational institutions. Housing too, has changed from the traditional bamboo and mud construction to ones made of concrete.<sup>376</sup>

Majuli constituency was created delimiting the areas of mainly Jorhat and few other adjacent constituencies in the year 1962. As people belonging to tribal community main inhabitants are of the area, it was declared as the constituency reserved for only Scheduled Tribe. Earlier in 1956, major part of the constituency was covered under 82 Jorhat Constituency which was reserved for ST. In the following table - the details of electors and those who voted in the elections are presented. It may be observed that there is a mix trend in the growth of voters from one general election to another. Between 1962 and 1967, there was a decline of voters in this constituency.

This was mainly due to the re-alignment of the constituencies of Jorhat district. Thus, there was a decline of 13.37 percentage voters in Majuli constituency in the year 1967 compared to 1962 elections. Thereafter in each subsequent election, the voters' strength was changing - sometimes at increasing rate and sometimes at decreasing rate.

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<sup>376</sup>Census of India., 2011

**Table 4.15: Electors and Votes Cast 1962-2016**

Year of Election	Total Electors	Total who voted	Percentage of votes polled				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)
1962	N/A	N/A	50474	N/A	N/A	21788	43.17%
1967	N/A	N/A	43726	N/A	N/A	21708	49.65%
1972	N/A	N/A	51377	N/A	N/A	27114	52.77%
1978	31224	26714	57938	24645	17431	42076	72.62%
1983	<b>Election not Held</b>						
1985	35553	31817	67370	29747	25386	55133	81.83%
1991	42757	38480	81237	32752	27344	60098	73.98%
1996	42926	39229	82155	34981	29810	6479	78.86%
2001	47697	44886	92583	38650	33534	72184	77.97%
2006	55781	51589	107370	45971	42357	88328	82.37%
2011	55587	52250	107837	43585	41680	85545	79.33%
2016	59363	55209	114572	49594	47429	97769	85.33%

\*N/A = Not Available

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1962-2016.<sup>377</sup>

As regards participation in election, it may be seen from the table that there has been a gradual growth of number of votes polled right since 1962. Although there is a decline in total electorates in 1967 polling percentage raise up to 49.65 percentages compare to 43.17 in 1962. In 1983, election was not held for Majuli constituency. A mixed trend of voting percentage could be observed in Majuli in the successive general elections. One notable fact is that since 1972, more than half of the voters of Majuli exercised their franchise which finally touched the level of 85.33percentage in the 2016 general election.<sup>378</sup>

Congress supremacy is visible in this constituency also. Out of the total of 11 Assembly elections, Indian National Congress won the seat 5 times and became runners up 5 times. As against this, Independent candidates won the seat twice, Janata Party once and AGP twice. In 1985, although the winning candidate Sri Padmeswar Doley was declared as independent candidate he was actually an AGP candidate. Due

<sup>377</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>378</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1962, 1967, 1972, 1983 and 1985, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India

to non-registration of the party with the Election Commission till that time he was declared as independent candidate. It was only in 1991 that the performance of the Congress party was decline from general trend. For the first time the party was pushed backed to fourth position in that year (Table 4.18). Since the constituency is reserved for Schedule Tribes (ST), parties have to select their candidates from among this community. It is seen that the candidates of this constituency are generally from the missing community for their numerical dominance in Majuli. It is worth mention here that in 2016 election Chief Ministerial Candidate of BJP, Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal contested from this constituency won the seat with 49602 votes.<sup>379</sup>

**Table 4.16: Gender -wise break-up of Candidates of Majuli (ST) Constituency since 1962**

Year of election	No of candidates			Year of Election	No of candidates		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
1962	4	0	4	1991	11	0	11
1967	3	0	3	1996	6	0	6
1972	2	0	2	2001	5	0	5
1978	4	0	4	2006	5	1	6
1983	<b>Election not Held</b>			2011	3	1	4
1985	5	0	5	2016	4	0	4

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1962-2016.<sup>380</sup>

The table above shows the number of candidates who contested in the elections since 1962. It may be observed that except in the year 2006 and 2011 no female candidate had contested the election from Majuli Assembly Constituency since its creation. In 2006, Shrimati Swarnalata Pegu for the first time contested the election.

She managed to get 02.75 percentage (2430 out of 88383 votes cast) and occupied the fifth position. In 2011 Anamika Doley contested a BJP candidate secured 2500 votes with 2.92 percentage of vote share.

<sup>379</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1962 and 2016, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

<sup>380</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]



### **Titabor Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC)**

Titabor is in the extreme Southern part of Jorhat district, bordering Nagaland about eight kilometres at a stretch and bounded by Kakadonga rivulet in the west and Mariani in the East. At present Titabor is a sub division, which includes 106 revenue villages, excluding the area under Titabar town, covering a total land area of 41,609 hectares.<sup>381</sup>

As per 2011, census total population of Titabor is 183,425. Out of which 94150 are males and 89725 were females. The sex ratio is 940 females against 1000 males is slightly higher than the national records. However, the figures might be increasing significantly at present in view of growing population pattern and influx of different category of people from outside the region. The literacy rate of Titabor is 63.25 percentages.<sup>382</sup> Titabor is well connected by road and railways. Na Ali and Gar Ali connect the town with Jorhat.

The people of Titabor constituency mainly depend on agriculture. The area is known for its fertile land. Total land coverage of Titabor under Agriculture and Tea gardens is 150000. Majority (66%) of the farmers are small and marginal while there are substantial percentages of landless families (about 10 percentages). There are no heavy industries in Titabor.<sup>383</sup>

Titabor constituency is one of the oldest constituencies of Jorhat district. The first election in this constituency was held in the year 1951. Total voters at that time were only 46974 out of which 48.39 percentage voters had casted their votes. The constituency was free from any significant alteration of its boundaries and as such, the size of the constituency has remained more or less stable.

Titabor constituency acquired an important position in the State as it happened to be the constituency of the former Chief Minister of Assam Shri Tarun Chandra Gogoi.

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<sup>381</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

<sup>382</sup>Census of India, Assam 2011. District census Handbook Jorhat, Village and Town Directory. Series-19 Part Xii-A, Directorate of Census Operations Assam.

<sup>383</sup>Census of India., 2011

The constituency has a considerable proportion of population belonging to OBC communities- mainly Ahoms. There are also other communities as well. Total population of the Titabor constituency is 201791 (2011, Census) out of which only 08.88 percentage are urban.<sup>384</sup>

**Table- 4.17: Voters Turnout in the Titabor Constituency 1951-2016**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Electors</b>	<b>Voting Percentage %</b>	<b>Wining Party</b>
1951	46727	60.08%	ABP
1957	46723	48.39%	INC
1962	49496	57.51%	INC
1967	47849	64.72%	INC
1972	53060	57.05%	INC
1978	65744	59.79%	CPI
1983	68766	2.49%	INC
<b>1985</b>	<b>75072</b>	<b>70.16%</b>	<b>IND</b>
1991	87557	66.33%	AGP
1996	95574	70.75%	AGP
2001	104465	73.70%	INC
2006	123446	70.82%	INC
2011	123529	71.45%	INC
2016	136227	83.40%	INC

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>385</sup>

Table (4.17) shows year wise election and voting percentage of electorates of Titabor constituency of Jorhat district. The trend of participation of this constituency has been fluctuating since the first assembly election held in 1951. In 1983, like other constituencies of Assam Titabor also recorded lowest percentage of voters turn out which was nearly 2.49 percentage under special socio-political circumstances otherwise the lowest percentage being the 48.39 percentage in 1957 assembly election.

The highest being 83.40 percentages in 2016 assembly election. It is remarkable that this constituency is an original constituency of the district where election has been held since 1951.<sup>386</sup>

<sup>384</sup>Census of India., 2011

<sup>385</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>386</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1951, 1957 and 2016, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [ Accessed 20/12/17]

**Table 4.18: Titabor Constituency: Electors and Votes Cast Since 1951**

Year of Election	Total Electors			Total Who Voted			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1951	N/A	N/A	46974	N/A	N/A	22729	48.39%
1956	N/A	N/A	47523	N/A	N/A	28552	60.08%
1962	N/A	N/A	49496	N/A	N/A	28463	57.51%
1967	N/A	N/A	47849	N/A	N/A	30969	64.72%
1972	N/A	N/A	53060	N/A	N/A	30269	57.05%
1978	35282	30462	65744	22608	16698	39306	59.79%
1983	36668	32098	68766	1033	676	1709	02.49%
1985	39668	35384	75052	28232	24424	52656	70.16%
1991	46802	40755	87557	32213	25861	58074	66.33%
1996	49380	46194	95574	35827	31623	67450	70.57%
2001	54789	49676	104465	41009	35980	76989	73.70%
2006	61940	61506	123446	45166	42230	87396	70.82%
2011	61800	61506	123446	45094	43040	88262	71.45%
2016	69256	66971	136227	57221	56256	113609	83.4%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>387</sup>

The constituency is known for its Congress stronghold. Out of the 14 elections held till 2016, Congress could manage to occupy the seat for 10 times and remained in second position for 3 times.

One notable fact worth mentioning here is that it is one of the few constituencies in Assam where Communist Party of India has a prominent position. Although CPI won the seat only for once, it occupied the second position for seven times. AGP won the seat twice when there were strong AGP wave immediately after the Assam Accord in 1985 and second after the death of Hiteswar Saikia, the Chief Minister in 1996.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>387</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>388</sup>Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1985 and 1996, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India. (URL: <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>) [Accessed 20/12/17]

**Table 4.19: Gender-wise Break-up of Candidates of Titabor Constituency since 1951**

Year of election	No of candidates			Year of Election	No of candidates		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
1951	7	0	7	1991	18	0	18
1956	5	0	5	1996	16	0	16
1962	4	0	4	2001	7	0	7
1967	5	0	5	2006	3	1	4
1972	3	0	3	2011	6	1	7
1978	11	0	11	2016	5	1	6
1983	2	0	2				
1985	10	0	10				

Source: Election Commission of India Compiled Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1951-2016.

The above table (4.23) shows the number of candidates who contested election in Titabor constituency since 1951. It may be seen from the table that in 1991 the highest number of candidates fought the election, which was 18. However, the most notable fact is that from 1951 till 2001 not a single female candidate had contested the poll from this constituency. It was only in the year 2006 that for the first time a women candidate participated in the Titabor election. Srimati Karabi Chakraborty contested the election as BJP candidate and secured 6.26 percentages of votes polled (5469 out of 87418 votes polled) and secured the fourth position. Subsequently in 2011 election, Manashi Bordoloi contested as a candidate of NCP and secured 648 votes with a share of only 0.50 percentages. In 2016, one female candidate contested from this constituency. It is seen that in all the election only 3 female candidates participated in the election process as candidates. In this way, females are far behind in direct politics compared to males in Titabor legislative constituency.

### **Jorhat Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC)**

Jorhat constituency has been frequently under bifurcation, trifurcation and amalgamation till 1967. In 1951 general elections there were two constituencies namely Jorhat North and Jorhat South having voters' strength as shown below. In the first election 75 Jorhat South and 76 Jorhat North both polled 46.62 per cent and 77.69 percentage respectively.<sup>389</sup>

<sup>389</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1951*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India

**Table 4.20: Jorhat North & South Constituency at a Glance**

Year of Election	Total Electors	Total who voted	Percentage of votes polled
1951(Jorhat South)	40024	18660	46.62%
1951( Jorhat North)	77236	60003	77.69%

**Source:** Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1952.<sup>390</sup>

Jorhat South was a unique two elector's constituency. It returned two Indian National Congress candidates, namely, Kuladhar Chaliha and Ramnath Das. Their close opponents were M. Sarwan of All People's Party and Pramod Kr Das of Socialist Party. There were altogether 5 candidates in Jorhat South and 12 in Jorhat North. No women candidates contested the poll in this first general election from Jorhat South Constituency. The results of the election are placed in the following table.

**Table- 4.21: Jorhat North & South Constituency at a Glance**

Winning candidate-1			Winning candidate -2			Runner up		
Name	Party	Vote polled	Name	Party	Vote's polled	Name	Party	Vote's polled
Ramnath Das	INC	15650	Nilamaoni Phukan	INC	11881	Pramod Kr Das	SP	7081
Kuladhar Chaliha	INC	7178	N/A*	N/A	N/A	M Sarwan	APP	5870

\*N/A = Not Available

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1952<sup>391</sup>

It is nothing surprising that Indian National Congress won all the above seats. The only prominent political party at that time was Socialist Party, which polled 37.95 percentages of the total votes i.e. 18660. In the year 1956, both the Jorhat constituencies were reorganized and named it as Jorhat Constituency only. It was declared reserved for Scheduled tribes as major part of it also covered ST dominated present Majuli constituency.

**Table 4.22: Jorhat (ST) Constituency at a Glance as in 1956**

Constituency	Year of Election	Total Electors	Total who voted	Percentage of votes polled
82 Jorhat (ST)	1956	95997	35767	37.26%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1956<sup>392</sup>

<sup>390</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>391</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

Because of this reorganization, the total numbers of electors in the Jorhat constituency had gone up to 95997. It however remained as a two-member constituency.

**Table 4.23: Election results of Jorhat (ST) Constituency 1956**

Winning candidate-1			Winning candidate -2			Runner up		
Name	Party	Vote polled	Name	Party	Vote polled	Name	Party	Vote polled
Mahidhar Pegu.	INC	NA	Debeswar Sarmah	INC	23040	Bongshidhar Dutta	PSP	12727

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1956<sup>393</sup>

In the second general election, again it was an all Congress affair. Both the seats were won by Congress candidates but this time PSP managed to get more votes in absolute terms although in proportion, its vote share has gone down to 35.58 per cent. There were only three candidates contesting the election. In the next general election in 1962, the constituency was reorganized again and renamed as Jorhat. Its reservation in favour of Scheduled tribe tag was removed and a new constituency namely Majuli was created earmarking it for scheduled tribe population of the area. The shape in relation to electorate of Jorhat constituency is shown below.

**Table 4.24: Jorhat Constituency at a Glance as in 1962**

Year of Election	Total Electors	Total who voted	Percentage of votes polled
1962	54444	28673	52.67%

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam, 1962.<sup>394</sup>

The table (4.24) shows that the constituency shrank from its earlier status. It has changed from double member constituency to a single member constituency. Of the total voters, only 52.67 per cent cast their votes in this election. However, this is an improvement over the last general election. The following table shows the election results.

<sup>392</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>393</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>394</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

**Table 4.25: Election results of Jorhat Constituency 1962**

Constituency	Winning candidate-1			Runner up		
	Name	Party	polled	Name	Party	Polled
85 Jorhat	Dulal Ch. Barua	IND	7848	Bongshidhar Dutta	PSP	7188

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Report of Assembly Election in Assam 1962.<sup>395</sup>

The Praja Socialist party had a strong base in Jorhat initially. The candidate from this party had managed to get quite a considerable numbers of votes in the elections of 1951 and 1956 and in this election to the gap between the winning candidate and the runner up was reduced further.

In the 1951 elections, the margin was 28 percentage of the total votes polled; in 1956 election it was reduced to 25 % and in 1962 election further reduced to 02.30 percentage. Although the margin was significantly reduced, yet the total votes polled by the PSP candidate had fallen from 35.58 % in 1956 to 25.07 percentage.<sup>396</sup>

The main reason behind this was the emergence of Dulal Chandra Barua in the Assam Politics who had mass support but was not a nominee of any of the national political parties. He contested the election independently. This emergence had created a new focal point in the Jorhat politics, which continued for a long time. Because of this, Congress became the loser in this election and was pushed back to third position. The Congress candidate received only 25.81 percentage of the total votes cast.

The electoral politics in Jorhat took a stable step only since 1967- the year of fourth general elections. It was stable in the sense that by that time people gathered the idea of elections, electioneering and political parties and how a strong opposition party or leaders can make a difference in the functioning of the government.

Before the fourth general (1967) election, Jorhat constituency was re-organized from time to time. However, no significant delimitation had taken place in respect of this constituency. The growth of voters and their participation in each successive election is presented in the following table.

<sup>395</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

<sup>396</sup>Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report of Legislative Election in Assam 1951, 1957, 1962, 2011 and 2016*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Election Commission of India

**Table- 4.26: Jorhat Constituency: Electors and Votes Cast since 1967**

Year of Election	Total Electors			Total who voted			Percentage (%)
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1967	N/A	N/A	44692	N/A	N/A	25895	57.94%
1972	N/A	N/A	51844	N/A	N/A	29079	56.09%
1978	36999	29261	66260	24706	17840	42546	64.21%
1983	40347	32030	72377	762	573	1335	01.84%
1985	49156	40455	89611	36165	29053	65218	72.78%
1991	56439	46236	102675	34568	27042	61610	60.00%
1996	60827	53725	114552	40150	36409	76559	66.83%
2001	67288	60217	127505	43912	37074	80986	63.52%
2006	74337	71089	145426	52186	49636	101822	70.11%
2011	77713	76246	153959	53399	51320	104953	68.17%
2016	81987	81806	163793	65071	65325	130809	79.86%

\*N/A = Not Available

Source: Election Commission of India Compiled Statistical Report of Assembly Election in Assam, 1967- 2016<sup>397</sup>

It may be observed from the above table that there has been a gradual growth of voters in the Jorhat constituency over the years. The growth was highest during 1978 election (27.81%) and lowest during the 1983 election. There is scope to believe that updating of voters' list in 1983 could not properly be done due to Assam agitation led by All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP). There was disruption of election related activities and call for election boycott. Normal life was paralyzed due to Bandh calls and Janata Curfews. Government officers were prevented from entering into the office. As such, the updating of voters list could hardly be called done in proper manner as required under Representation of People's Act. From 1985 onwards, however growth of voters was within the range of 11 percentages and 14 percentages.

As regards casting of votes however, no definite trend could be visible in the Jorhat constituency during the elections under consideration. The 1983 election was an exceptional one as the authority thought it was an obligation to held election for constitutional continuity and the public thought that it was their sacred duty to resist election. Election was held under strict security and the result is before us. Only 1.84

<sup>397</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]



percentages of the total votes polled and there was a negative growth of -96.86 percentage in votes polled compared to the preceding election.

**Table 4.27: Voting Turnout in the Jorhat Legislative Assembly Constituency 1962-2016**

Year	Total Electors	Voting Percentage %	Wining Party
1962	54444	52.67%	IND
1967	44692	57.94%	INC
1972	51844	56.09%	INC
1978	662060	64.21%	JNP
1983	72377	1.84%	INC
1985	89611	72.78%	IND
1991	102675	60.00%	AGP
1996	114720	66.78%	AGP
2001	127505	63.52%	AGP
2006	145426	70.11%	INC
2011	153959	68.17%	INC
2016	163793	79.86%	BJP

Source: Election Commission of India, Compiled Statistical Report of Assembly Election in Assam, 1951-2016.<sup>398</sup>

The table no (4.27) above shows the voting percentage of Jorhat LAC since 1962. In 1951 the constituency was named as Jorhat North and Jorhat South and after that in 1957 this was redesigned as Jorhat (ST) constituency. After the close look on voting percentage of the constituency in the different assembly elections it is seen that in all the elections percentage was above 50 percentage except 1983 election which recorded only 1.84 percentage voters turn out. It is also observed that there have been consistencies among the voters of this constituency and there have always opted for voting in the election. The Jorhat Legislative Assembly Constituency consists of urban, semi urban and rural areas with composite nature of population from high caste Hindus to tea garden labours. But it is seen that in spite of massive political mobilization by the parties this constituency recorded a lower percentage of voters turn out in 2016 assembly election in comparisons to other constituency of the district as well as the state.

There is prominence of Indian National Congress in the Jorhat constituency. The party contested in all 11 general elections held since 1967 out of which it won 5 times

<sup>398</sup>[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx) [Accessed 03/01/18]

and became runners up in 5 times. Only in the 1978 election, the party was placed in the third position. Apart from the INC, Asom Gana Parishad, a regional party won the seat thrice consecutively in 1991, 1996 and 2001 elections. In 1985, AGP supported independent candidate, Abhijit Sarma won the election. In 1978 election were won Janata Party candidate Dulal Chandra Baruah. However, Congress recovered the possession again in 2006 election. In 2016, Hitendra Nath Goswami won the election as a BJP candidate from the constituency. Earlier Goswami was a leader of AGP contested and won in 1991, 1996 and 2001 election as a candidate of this regional party, later he joined BJP.

It is observed that the political parties always prefer to put candidates from general caste in this constituency particularly from the caste Hindu community. Only in 1972 when Bijoy Krishna Handique elected from Jorhat as a candidate of INC who belonged to OBC community. It is because of the fact that caste Hindu population has a strong hold in this constituency.

The trend of electoral politics and political participation of the district of Jorhat is more or less similar to that of the politics of the state of Assam. Except the Mariani LAC, where there has been different kind of electoral outcomes. The constituency mostly dominated by Tea Tribes community. The contesting candidates of this constituency are also the leaders of this community except some occasions. INC has been able to win the seats in all the election except in 1985 where AGP won it. The Teok constituency of the district shows mixed outcomes of elections. In spite of the presence INC, regional sentiments supporting regional parties is very much there has mostly dominated the constituency. The left party, CPI has also some strength in this constituency. This party won the election in 1972. The Majuli constituency is reserved for Mishing community mainly dominates ST. However, INC has a strong hold in this constituency winning most of the election but the regional party, AGP also has a remarkable number of supporters in Majuli for which it consecutively won the seat in 1985, 1991 and 1996 elections. Most of the candidates contesting the elections represent the Mishing community in this constituency. INC. also dominates the Titabor constituency of the district. However, AGP won the seat in two occasions. Once this constituency was dominated by CPI in 1978 when Giridhar Thengal, a very

prominent left leader won the seat. The Jorhat LAC has shown mixed electoral outcomes mostly represented by caste Hindu candidates with regional sentiments. INC won majority of the election in the constituency held so far. Party won the election in 1978 with its candidates Dulal Chandra Baruah one of the active social worker of the district of that time. AGP won the election for four consecutive terms from 1985 to 2001. In 2016, AGP left the seat to BJP because of their pre poll alliance. Most of the candidates of this constituency represents caste Hindu community particularly Brahmins and Mahanatas. There is no such presence of left parties or their ideologies in the Jorhat constituency. All the constituency of the district show a similar trend of political participation during the election. Although electorates of the district have conscious political mind-set because of their educational and cultural background but the electoral politics of the district is mostly determining by caste and community factors as stated earlier except on some special occasions.

There are different factors, which directly or indirectly influence the electoral politics of Jorhat district of Assam

### **Community factor**

It is fact that several socio-demographic factors play crucial role in Jorhat politics. These factors have influences in one or more constituencies of the district and therefore given weightage during electioneering. The community factor is discussed below under the following headings.

### **Multi Ethnic composition**

Multi-ethnic composition of population is one of the distinguishing features of Jorhat District. In contemporary times, electoral politics of any region or polity is influenced by ethnic issues; along with other demographic and social, political and economic forces and factors. The social situation of Jorhat reflects the general multi-ethnic characteristics of the social fabric of Assam. Numerous communities of Assam are divided along different lines of ethnicity, language, religion and such other criteria. Assamese societies by virtue of its geo-politic, historical and ethnic linkages seem to exhibit certain distinctive characteristics when compared with the rest of the nation.

At present, the bulk of the indigenous population in Assam is constituted by Assamese Hindus. Various tribal communities living in hills and also in plains are at different levels of acculturation, integration and assimilation with the greater Assamese Society. The local Muslim population is also sizeable in proportion and their contribution to the composite socio-cultural milieu is quite significant and considerable while there is a small but significant Assamese Sikh community. Christianity has been adopted by particularly the tribal groups. During the colonial period, one can observe the crystallization of a new community namely the tea garden community emerging from the different labourers brought in by the colonial planters (British) as indentured labourers from the Chhota Nagpur Plateau region.

### **Caste and Ethnicity**

It has been an established fact that in Indian situation, caste is also an important force that influences political decisions. The lack of homogeneity in the Indian population causes division between different sections of the people based on religion, region, language, caste and ethnicity. This has led to the rise of political parties with agendas catering to one or a mix of these groups.

### **Tea Tribal Community: Tea Garden Votes:**

Tea labourers comprise an enormous chunk of the electorate in the constituencies of Jorhat district. They usually vote in blocks – as per their community decisions. That is why the candidates try to woo these voters during electioneering. The results of almost 30 assembly constituencies of Assam are largely determined by the votes of these communities. Within the district under study, Mariani Assembly constituency is such a tea dominated constituency.

### **Scheduled Tribe Factor**

Another dominating factor in Jorhat polity is the Scheduled tribe factor. Scheduled tribe factor is most prominent in the Majuli Constituency of Jorhat. More than 70 percent of the total inhabitants of Majuli are Mishings- a hill tribe living in plains. Due to this, Majuli Assembly Constituency is reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Apart from them, the inhabitants are also from the Deori and Sonowal Kachari tribes.

### **Influence of Ahom community**

As Jorhat was the last capital of the Ahom kingdom, there is a quite sizeable proportion of population belonging to Ahom community. Ahoms are a community of Tai origin who entered into Assam in the 13<sup>th</sup> century through the Patkai ranges in the East from Burma and slowly took control over most of the communities living in the hills and valleys of this region. They finally managed to rein over Assam and rule for about six hundred years. Although they have become hinduized but have not become a part of the Caste, structure and have no place in the traditional caste hierarchy.

### **Influence of Social Classes**

One can observe the presence of different social classes ranging from rural agriculturists and labourers in tea plantations to educated elites of different categories like tea plantation owners, managers, OIL executives, service holders, educated and business elites, rural landowners, satradhikars, freedom fighters, new political elites among others. Because of the presence of highly literate population, people of the district are much more aware of their problems. Thus, they are quite conscious politically.

### **Role of elites**

In the study district, role of the elites who mainly belong to the Upper class and middle class is very significant not only as voters but also as a force influencing the voting trend among the common masses. The district is highly literate and has quite a few research and technical institutions besides a large number of schools and colleges of repute. The oldest residents of this ever-prosperous city have played a pivotal role in moulding the city to what it is today. Among them are the families of Handique, the Singhs, Sharmas and Borgohains who are considered as the most influential families in transforming the once sleepy city into a bustling and a well-organised city.

### **Election Issues**

The issues or forces and factors that influence the outcome of elections are many and varied. It includes population diversity on ethnic, linguistic, religious lines class and caste factors, geographical and topographical conditions, economic level, poverty,

occupational pattern, education. Since the first elections, various political parties to woo voters have raised several common issues. Repeatedly these have become realized as the burning problem of the region. Various political parties had also published their Manifesto assuring voters to solve these burning problems. Some of the major issues raised before every general in the district of Jorhat are presented in the following table.

**Table: 4.28: Issues Before Various General Elections in Jorhat District**

Year	Issues -I	Issues –II	Issues -III	Issues -IV	Issues -V
1951	stability	unemployment			
1956	development	Land reforms	Cottage industries	Agriculture	-
1962	Rural development	Land reforms	poverty	unemployment	-
1967	security	reconstruction	industrialization	Medium of instruction	-
1972	development	Oil refinery	unemployment	Medium of instruction	-
1978	education	development	poverty	unemployment	-
1983	peace			Development	-
1985	Assam Accord	Agriculture	unemployment	foreigners	-
1991	Insurgency	Peace	Development	Interstate border with Nagas	-
1996	Insurgency	Economic stability	Poverty	Unemployment	Cultural upliftment
2001	Peace	Development	Economic stability	Panchayat Election	Rural development
2006	Peace	All round development	Economic stability	Employment generation	Health and education for all
2011	Development	Employment generation	Health Security	Foreigners issue	Peace
2016	Change	Good governance	Employment	Foreigners issue	Development

It may be observed from the table above that the major issues have remained same right from the beginning. Unemployment problem has been still an election issue and a burning issue for the State as well as the district. This issue has been raised in almost every election. Likewise, poverty, agricultural underdevelopment etc. are still a burning topic discussed during elections. Since 1991, insurgency issue has overpowered all the issues that were discussed as major issue till that time. This was followed by the issues are peace and development. Few other issues discussed locally are floods in Majuli, Assam Nagaland border disputes in Jorhat, labour welfare in Mariyani etc.

## Discussion on General Elections in Jorhat District

Elections in Jorhat held simultaneously with the elections in other districts of Assam. A total of 14 General Elections had held till 2016. However, the election results of 2011 election is appended to this report for reference. In this part findings related to the general elections in Jorhat district constituency wise since the first general elections in 1952 are discussed. Prior to that it will be worthwhile to mention the specific characteristics of few special elections which are also the landmark in the in the political history of Assam

**Table – 4.29: General Elections in Jorhat and their Significance**

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Year of Election</b>	<b>Significance</b>
1	1951,56,62,67,72	Usual Election
6	1978	Significant as the first election after the declaration of controversial emergency of 1976 and first non-congress government formed by Janata Party
7	1983	Significant because people boycotted the election held during Assam Agitation.
8	1985	Significant because i) First election after Assam Agitation ii) AGP formed and taken part in election iii) Regional sentiment everywhere
9	1991	Usual Election
10	1996	Death of INC leader and CM Hiteswar Saikia. Created vacuum in leadership in Assam Congress
11	2001	Poor economic condition and failure of AGP
12	2006	Usual Election
13	2011	Usual Election
14	2016	Set back of congress after three consecutive terms, rise of BJP, formation of first government by BJP –AGP – BPF and others.

## **CHAPTER V**

# **FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSES**

Electoral politics and political participation are integral parts of democratic politics. There are various factors, which determine the electoral politics of a society. Religion, language, caste, community etc. are important determinates in the functioning of electoral politics in India. Economy, education, gender and age factors always influence in shaping the trends of political participation of Indian electoral democracy. During the field study, these factors were given proportionate importance and they were used as variables to justify the analysis. It is important in a social survey to take sample representing all these variables. In the study the data has been collected keeping all these factors in mind. Before entering into the question wise or thematic explanation and analysis of results of the survey a brief account of total number of respondents corresponding to various variables is presented below.

In this survey, attempts were made to see the factors influencing the electoral politics of Jorhat district in particular and the state of Assam in general. To analyse the changing trends of people's participation in the electoral process some particular variables were used like education, gender etc.

### **5.1 BACKGROUND DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS**

#### **GENDER**

Gender is a very important indicator in any Socio-Political survey. In the survey equal numbers of male and female respondents were selected. It has made the survey



more gender representative. In Assam, it is seen that percentage age of participation of both males and females' electorates are nearly the same in all the election.

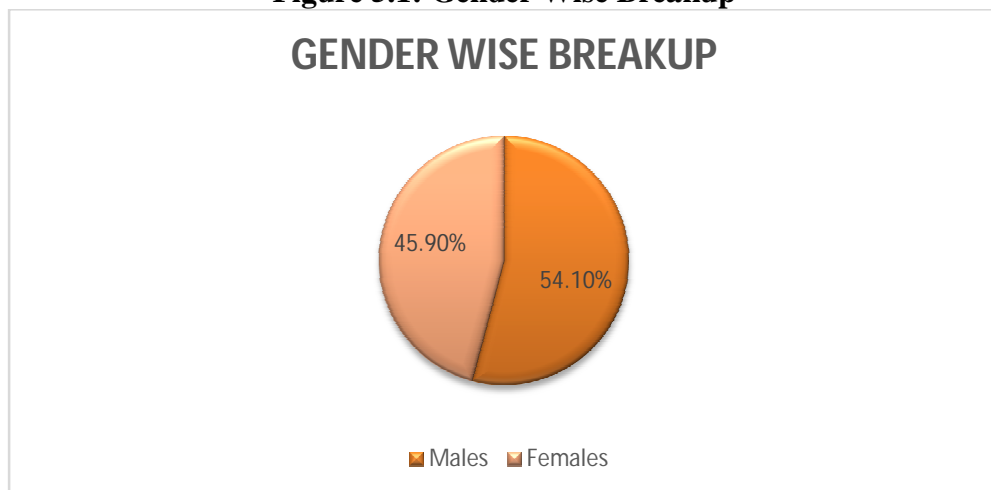
**Table 5.1: Gender Breakup of the Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Males	319	54.1%
Females	271	45.9%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

The table no 5.1 shows the percentage of male and female respondents in the survey. Out of 590 respondents, 319 were male and 271 were females. The percentage of males and females' respondents is 54.1 and 45.9 respectively.

**Figure 5.1: Gender Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Gender Wise Breakup of the respondents

## **AGE**

Age is considered a very crucial factor, having tremendous influence and effect on political participation. A general trend is observed and the urge to participate arises in the early years, takes its peak in the middle Ages, and gradually falls in the later ages. The age group of the respondents interviewed are given in the chart below-

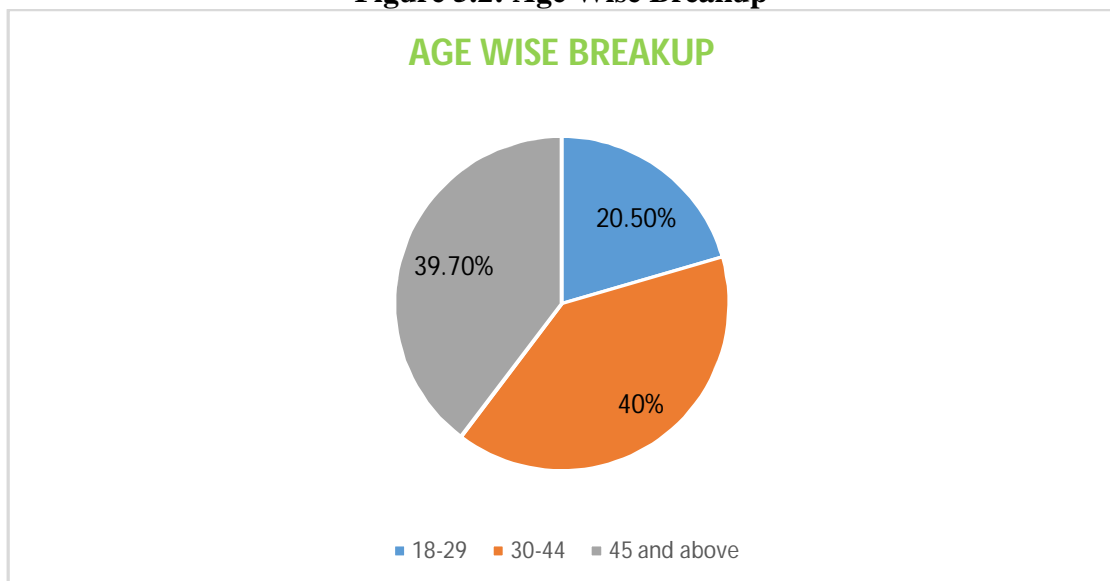
**Table- 5.2: Age Breakup of the Respondents**

Age of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-29	121	20.5%
30-44	235	39.8%
45 and above	234	39.7%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

As far as the age of the respondents is concerned, it is observed from the above table that 20.5 percentages of the respondents were found above the age of 18 years, 39.8 percentages were above 30 years and 39.7 percentage respondents were 45 and above. The respondents were taken in such a way to get a balanced view of both younger and older generations about the political parameters of Jorhat district.

**Figure 5.2: Age Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Age Wise Breakup of the respondents

## **RELIGION**

Religion is another strong determinant of the social background of the members of a society. It plays a very influential and decisive role in shaping India's socio-political

environment. The religious backgrounds of the respondents are presented in the following table.

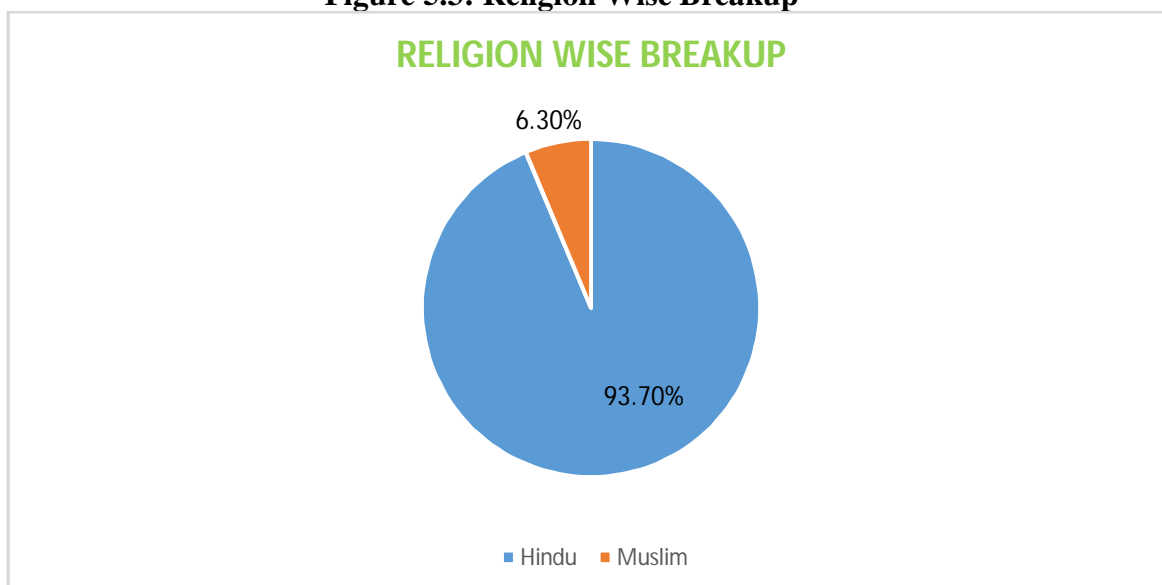
**Table 5.3: Religion wise Distribution of the Respondents**

Religion of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hindu	553	93.7%
Muslim	37	6.3%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

Out of 590 respondents, 553 were Hindus and 37 were Muslims. People of other religions could not be selected in the present survey, as numbers of them were very negligible in the study area.

**Figure 5.3: Religion Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Religion Wise Breakup of the respondents

## LANGUAGE

Language is considered as one of the most important factors of individual and collective identity. People consider such linguistic identity while taking part in a

political process. In a state like Assam, linguistic traits have significant relevance. The following table shows the percentage of respondents in terms of language in the survey.

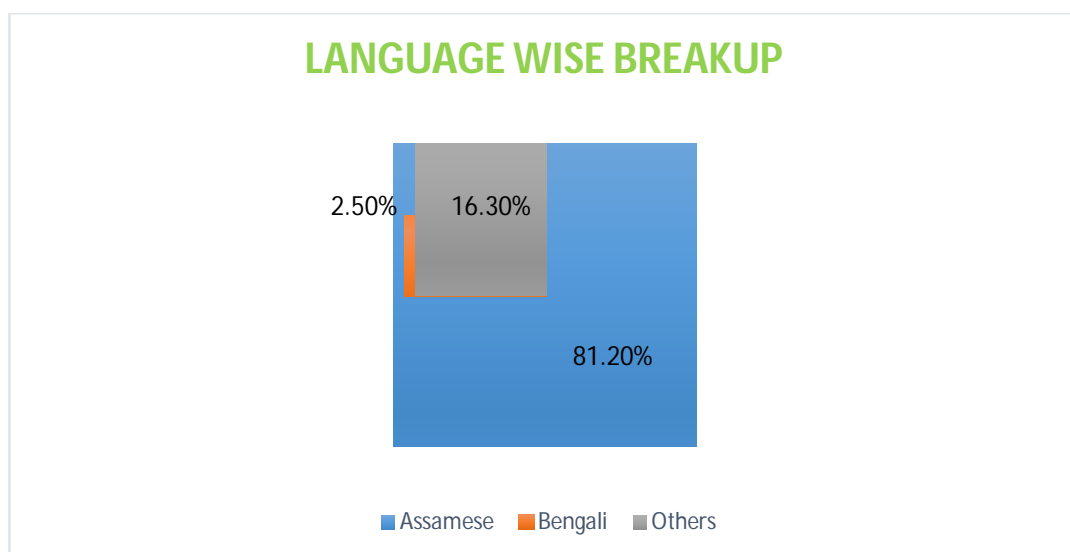
**Table: - 5.4 Language-wise Distribution of the Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Assamese	479	81.2%
Bengali	15	2.5%
Others	96	16.3%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

During the survey, selected respondents were mainly Assamese speaking. 81 percentage of the total respondents were Assamese and only 2.5 percentage were Bengali Speaking.

**Figure 5.4: Language Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Language Wise Breakup of the respondents

## **CASTE**

Caste stratification is unique in Indian society. It is one of the motivating factors that influence the peoples' involvement and decisions on social issues and political

process. On many occasions, caste affiliation indirectly or directly becomes very dominant during the course of any local, state and national level elections. Respondents interviewed during the survey were from different caste and communities, which is presented, in the following table.

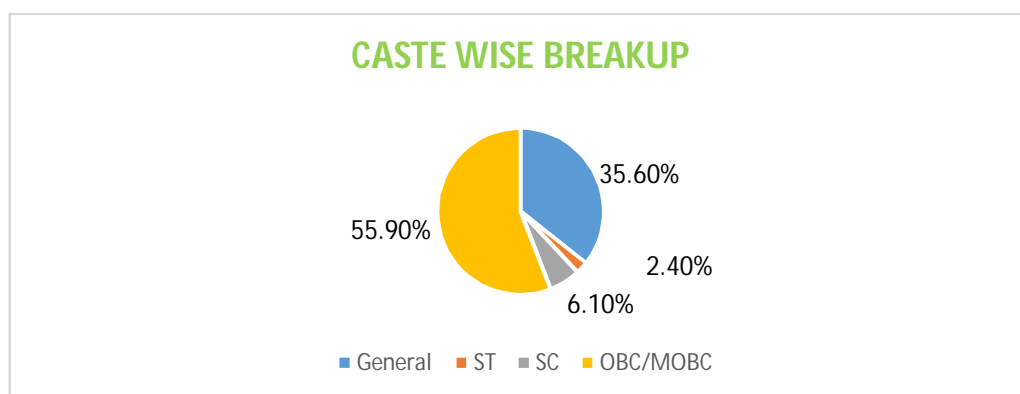
**Table 5.5: Caste Breakup of the Respondents**

<b>Caste of respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
General	210	35.6%
ST	14	2.4%
SC	36	6.1%
OBC/MOBC	330	55.9%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

Out of total respondents 35.6 percentages were general 2.4 percentage 6.1 percent and 55.9 percentage were ST, SC, OBC/MOBC respectively.

**Figure 5.5: Caste Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Caste of the respondents

## EDUCATION

The educational background of the respondents deserves detailed analysis as this factor alone predominantly modulates the perceptions of people either directly or indirectly. Education is the most important social factor influencing political participation. It is believed that education of a citizen is an essential prerequisite for performing greater role in the political process and higher education adds to the efficiency level. It is expected that education would have a positive impact in determining the degree of political interest of the respondents concerned. The educated person can be more conscious towards his/her duties and responsibilities. Most of the political scientists are of the view that education is the most decisive factor for political participation. For the purpose of conducting the survey, the educational level has been divided into five categories which are given below:

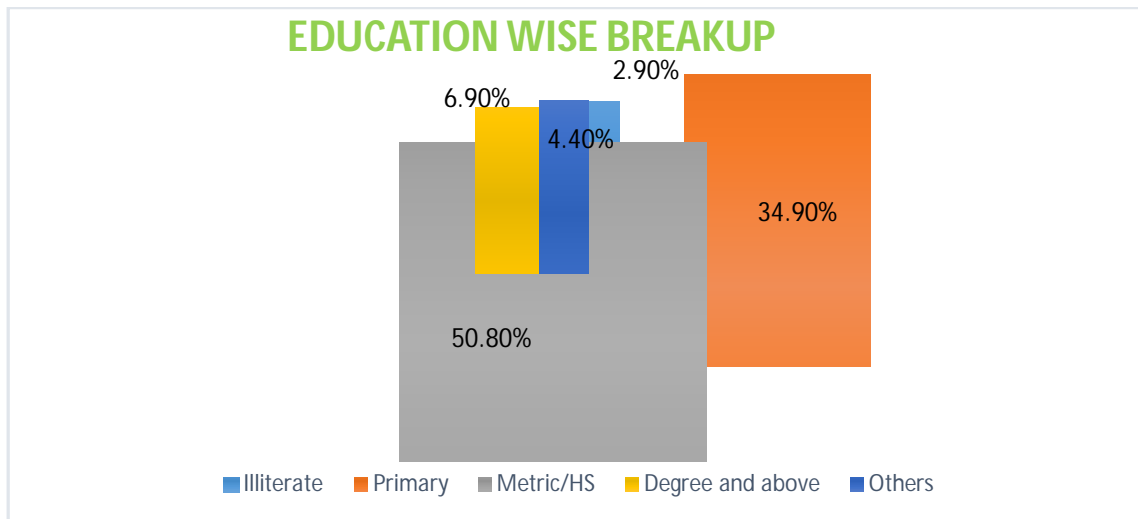
**Table 5.6: Education wise Distribution of the Respondents**

<b>Education Level of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Illiterate	17	2.9%
Primary	206	34.9%
Metric/HS	300	50.8%
Degree and above	41	6.9%
Others	26	4.4%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

In the survey, 2.9 percentage respondents were illiterate while 34.9 percentage were having only primary education. 50.8 percent of total respondents had qualification of HSLC or H.S, 6.9 percentage were having degree and above level of education. 4.4 percentage of the respondents were educated with other than general education.

**Figure 5.6: Education Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Education of the respondents

## OCCUPATION

The economic status of an individual has been considered as an important factor since election emerged as a vital instrument to legitimate governance whether totalitarian or democratic. So, income or profession of an individual has influence upon the political participation. Therefore, it becomes important to study the income of the respondents.

Source of income or livelihoods of the respondent are indicated in the table below.

**Table 5.7: Occupation wise Distribution of the Respondents**

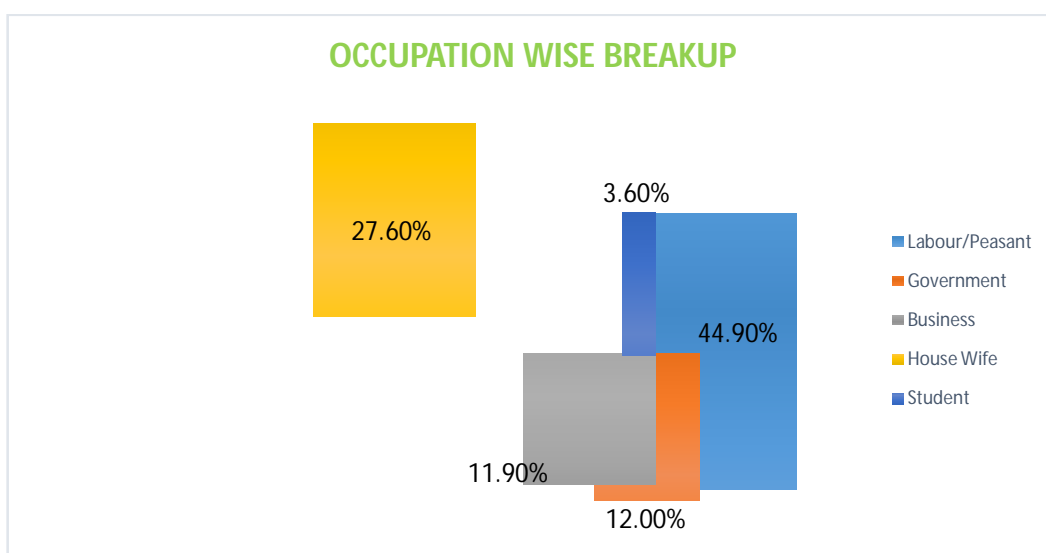
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Labour/Peasant	265	44.9%
Government	71	12.0%
Business	70	11.9%
House Wife	163	27.6%
Student	21	3.6%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

In the survey 44.9 percentage respondents were composed of labourers, Tea garden worker's peasants and daily wage earners. 12 percentages of them were government

employees 11.9 percent earn their livelihood by means of some business 27.6 percentage of the respondents are house wife's rest 3.6 percent of them are students.

**Figure 5.7: Occupation Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Occupation of the respondents

## MARITAL STATUS

Marital status can also change the perception of an individual in respect of socio – political motivation of an individual. So the respondents' marital status was considered as an important parameter to influence his/her participation in politics. During the survey respondents were requested to pronounce about their marital status. This table below shows the marital status of the respondents of the study area.

**Table 5.8: Marital Status-wise Breakup of the Respondents**

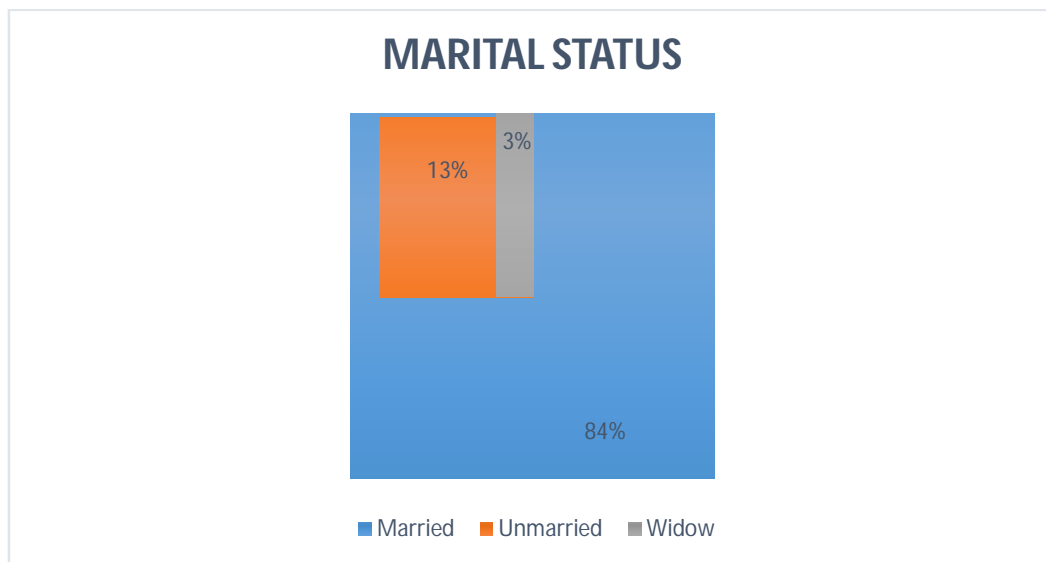
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	497	84.2%
Unmarried	75	12.7%
Widow	18	3.1%
Total	590	100.0%

Source: Field study



Among the respondents of the survey 84.2 percentage are married 12.7 percentage are unmarried and 3.1 percent are widows.

**Figure 5.8: Marital Status Wise Breakup**



Pie-Diagram shows the Marital Status of the respondents

## **5.2 QUESTION-WISE ANALYSIS OF FIELD SURVEY**

Participation of the people gives legitimacy to an electoral process. More participation indicates greater level of sustainability of a democratic system. There are different factors, which influence people's mind and action during the election. Among these factors benefits of voting or participation in other electoral activities at the individual level is considered as important. In this regard, it can be referred about the basic logic of voting as mention in Downs' work Rational Choice. According to him voters vote as per their self-interest and the parties or candidate who received votes are also rational because they have their own interest. This interest is not clear but always

uncertain. This situation of uncertainty always became the backbone of an electoral system.

- **Individual Benefits of Voting**

During the field study, the respondents were requested to comment if they derived any benefits by casting votes in the elections. It is found that 37 percentages of males and 36.2 percentage of the female's respondents said that they derived some kinds of benefits by casting votes. On the other hand, 63 percentage males and 63.8 percentages of females out of total respondents reacted negativity.

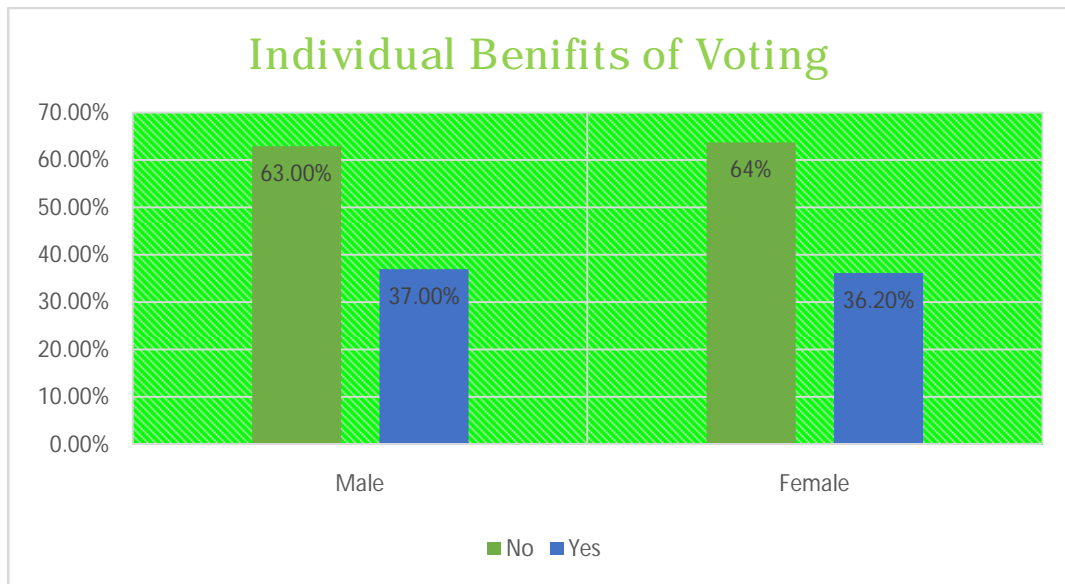
**Table 5.9: Individual Benefits (Gender)**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	63.0%	63.8%	63.4%
Yes	37.0%	36.2%	36.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

Looking at the level of education and question of personal benefits of voting, the survey shows that 29.4 percentage illiterate people said that they often cast their votes in anticipation of some personal benefits. 31.1 percentage of the respondents having primary level education said that they casted their votes for some kind of personal benefits. 38.0 percentage of the respondents with secondary and H.S level education expressed that they voted in the election expecting certain personal benefits and 48.8 percentage of the total respondents having degree and above level education said that they caste vote to get some kinds of personal benefits. It is interesting to observe that people with higher level of education have more expectation to derive some kinds of benefits at individual level by their participation in the electoral process.

**Figure: 5.9 Gender Wise Individual Benefits of Voting**



Bar-Diagram shows the Gender Wise Individual Benefits of Voting of the respondents

**Table 5.10: Individual Benefits**

	Illiterate	Primary	Metric/HS	Degree/above	Others	Total
No	70.6%	68.9%	62.0%	51.2%	50.0%	63.4%
Yes	29.4%	31.1%	38.0%	48.8%	50.0%	36.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

In this regard, when people were asked to mention about the types of benefits expected to derive by casting votes in the election, 65.4 percentages of the respondents having education of degree and above said that job assurance by the candidate or by a political party motivate them to caste vote in the elections and to participate in other non-voting activities during the election. It can be referred to table no 5.11 that 80 percentage of the illiterate electorates casted their votes to get some clothes from the candidate or the party during the elections, 32.8 percentages of the people under the survey with primary levels of education expressed that they voted to

get some monetary benefits. In such a way the survey reveals that anticipate of personal benefits motivates the electorates to cast their vote in the elections.

**Table 5.11: Types of Benefits (Education)**

	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree/ above</b>	<b>Other specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
Monetary	0.0%	32.8%	15.8%	0.0%	23.1%	19.4%
Clothes	80.0%	1.6%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%
Job assurance	0.0%	15.6%	28.1%	65.4%	7.7%	25.9%
Others	20.0%	50.0%	54.4%	35.0%	69.2%	51.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

- **Influence of Friends and Neighbours on Selecting a Candidate While Voting**

In many cases, suggestions from friends and neighbours become determining while choosing a candidate for voting before elections.

**Table 5.12: Influence of Suggestions (Gender)**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Never	43.3%	30.3%	37.3%
Sometimes	33.5%	30.3%	32.0%
All Times	23.2%	39.5%	30.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

When the respondents were asked whether they took any suggestion from friends or neighbours before choosing a candidate, 33.5 percentages of males and 30.3 percentage of female's respondents said that sometimes they took suggestions from their friends and neighbours and 23.2 percentages of males and 39.5 percentages of females said that they regularly took such suggestions while choosing a candidate (Table 5.12).

**Table 5.13: Influence of Suggestions (Education)**

	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric /HS</b>	<b>Degree/ above</b>	<b>Others specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	23.5%	36.9%	36.7%	43.9%	46.2%	37.3%
Sometimes I do	11.8%	30.1%	33.3%	43.9%	26.9%	32.0%
All times	64.7%	33.0%	30.0%	12.2%	26.9%	30.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

While looking at the table, no 5.13, it can be observing that people with higher level of education take individual decision while choosing a candidate in an election. It is seen that 64.7 percentage of the people with no formal education took the suggestions regularly while choosing a candidate in an election, 33 percentage of the respondents having primary education took such suggestion in all elections, 30 percentage of the respondents having secondary and higher secondary level education obtain such suggestion during elections regularly. On the other hand, only 12.2 percentages of the respondents with degree and above level of education seek these kinds of suggestion regularly. It shows that people with higher level of education take individual decision in taking part in the elections or casting their votes.

- **Factors Influential in Choosing a Candidate in Election**

In India, there are many socio economic factors, which influence the voters at different levels in selecting a candidate while casting their votes. Among them caste, clan or tribe of a candidate become a major determinate during the elections. On the other hand, socio-economic status, educational and political experience, capacity to render social service are also some the major issues before the electorates to consider a candidate in election. Opinion of the respondents about these factors is presented in the table (5.14) below.

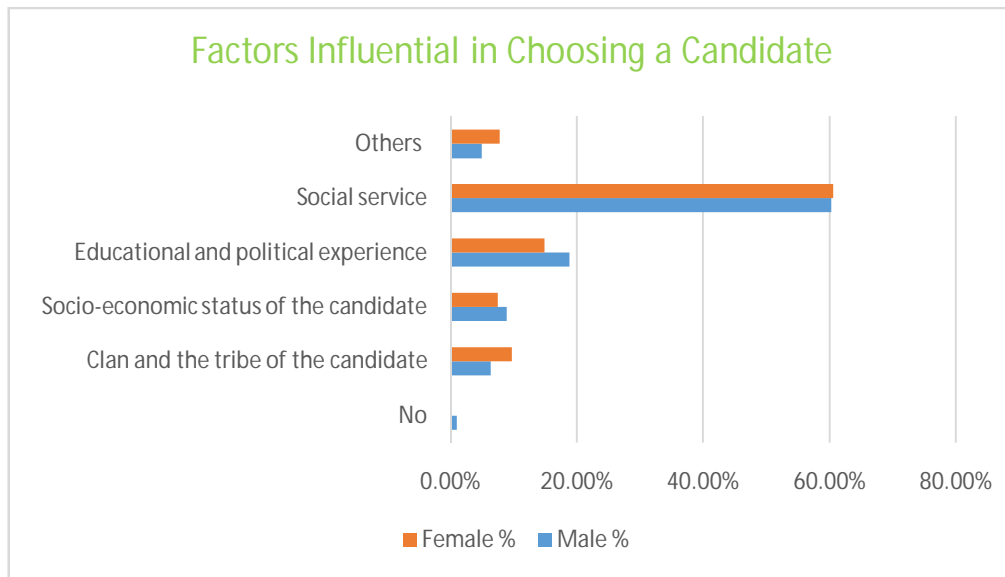
**Table5.14: Factors in Choosing a Candidate (Gender)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	.9%	0%	.5%
Clan and the tribe of the candidate	6.3%	9.6%	7.8%
Socio-economic status of the candidate	8.8%	7.4%	8.1%
Educational and political experience	18.8%	14.8%	16.9%
Social service	60.2%	60.5%	60.3%
Others	4.9%	7.7%	6.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

In the survey, it was observed that 6.3 percentages of males and 9.6 percentages of female respondents consider clan and tribe of the candidate during the election. While 8.8 percentages and 7.4 percentages of male and female respondents in considered socio-economic status of the candidates in an election. 18.8 percentages of males and 14.8 percentages of females' electorates considered educational and political experience of a candidate during the election. It is interesting to see that 60.2 percentage of male and 60.5 percentage of female voters take into account the capacity of a candidate in rendering social service work for the cause and development of the society.

**Figure: 5.10 Factors Influential in Choosing a Candidate**



Clustered Bar-Diagram Shows the factors influential in choosing a candidate during the election

While cross verifying the influence of these factors among the respondents by their level of education, it is seen that 47.1 percentages of illiterates show their interest in a candidate with the background of social service. 59.7 percentages of the respondents having primary education, 60.7 percentage with secondary and higher secondary level education and 73.2 percentage with degree and above level of education considered a strong background of social service of a candidate while casting their votes. Data is presented in the table 5.15 below.

**Table 5.15: Factors Influential in Choosing a Candidate (Education)**

<b>Education Levels</b>	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree/ above</b>	<b>Others Specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	0.0	.5%	.7%	0.0	0.0	.5%
Clan and the tribe of the candidate	17.6%	11.2%	4.7%	0.0	23.1	7.8%
Socio-economic status of the candidate	23.5%	12.6%	5.3%	0.0	7.7	8.1%
Educational and political experience	11.8%	9.2%	22.7%	22.0	7.7	16.9%
Social service	47.1%	59.7%	60.7%	73.2	50.0	60.3%
Others	0.0	6.8%	6.1%	4.9	11.4	6.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0	100.0	100.0%

Source: Field Study

**Table 5.16: Factors in Choosing a Candidate (Caste)**

	<b>General</b>	<b>ST</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>OBC/MOBC</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	1.0%	0.05	0.0%	.3%	.5%
Clan and the tribe of the candidate	3.8%	21.4%	33.3%	7.0%	7.8%
Socio-economic status of the candidate	2.4%	14.3%	0.0%	12.4%	8.1%
Educational and political experience	14.8%	21.4%	2.8%	19.7%	16.9%
Social service	72.4%	28.6%	50.0%	55.2%	60.3%
Others	5.3%	14.2%	13.9%	5.4%	6.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

Looking at the caste-wise data from the table - 5.16 it can be observed that 72.4 percentages of general voters, consider social service as the most important parameter to choose a candidate in an election. On the other hand, 21.4 of Schedule caste (SC) voters take clan and tribe of a candidate as important criteria to vote in the election. Only 28.6 percentage of schedule Tribe (ST) voters, choose their candidate on the basis of social service which is much lower compared to other caste.



- **Reasons for Non-Participation in Electoral Process**

In most of the democracies of the world, there is no compulsion for voters to cast votes in the election. Voting is a political right and in democracy, it becomes a duty of the citizens. Many times certain voters remain absent from voting due to many individual reasons and for a kind of apathy towards the political system. Sometimes, an individual remain absent because of his physical inability or busy schedule. There is a process of continuous up gradation of electoral rolls before any general election and sometimes names of the voters may not appear in the electoral roll for which one cannot cast vote during an election. Some voters are not interested in voting because they do not consider it important enough to exercise their duty. During the election they remain absent because of their dissatisfaction with the entire process or the political system. In the field study, some respondents did not vote or could not vote during the elections due to some reasons. The data is presented in the table (5.17)

**Table 5.17: Reasons for Non-Participation (Gender)**

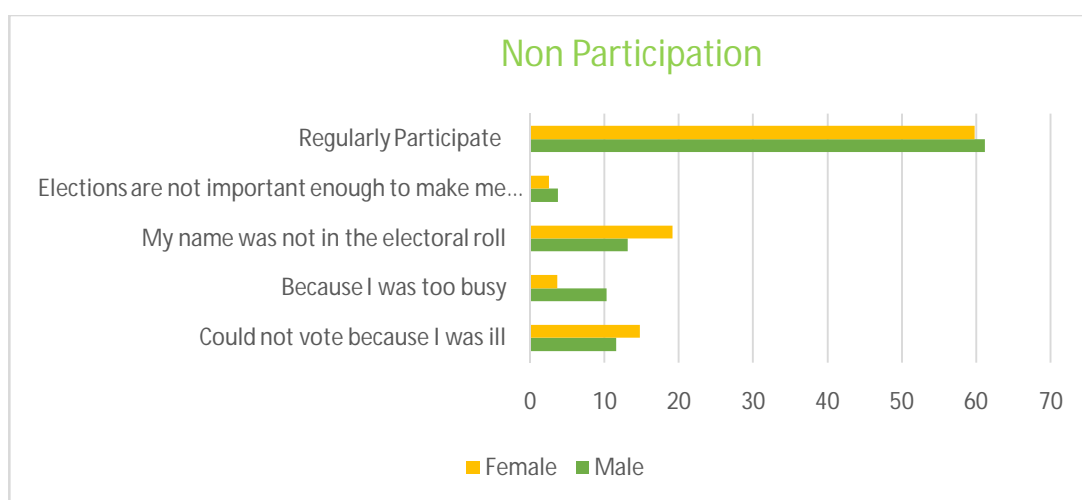
	Male	Female	Total
Could not vote because I was ill	11.6%	14.8%	13.1%
Because I was too busy	10.3%	3.7%	7.3%
My name was not in the electoral roll	13.2%	19.2%	15.9%
Elections are not important enough to make me bother to vote	3.8%	2.6%	3.2%
Regularly Participate	61.1%	59.8%	60.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

In the survey, some reasons are placed before the respondents as a cause of their absence in voting or non-participation in the electoral process. It was found that 13 percentage of the respondents stated that they could not vote because of their illness and physical inability. More than 7.3 percentage of the total respondents justified that they could not vote in the election due to their hectic schedule and business. 5.9

percentages of the total voters could not vote in the election, as their names were not listed in the electoral roll published by election authority before elections. Whereas 3.2 percentages of the total voters showed disinterest in the entire process of the election and they did not consider it as important enough to bother them to vote in the election. Moreover, 60.5 percentages of the total respondents regularly participated in the election.

**Figure: 5.11 Reasons of Non-Participation**



Clustered Bar-Diagram Shows reason of Non-Participation during the Election

The Table 5.18 presented below shows data verifying the causes of absence of the respondent with their level of education. The table that 29.4 percentages of illiterate respondents could not vote because of their illness, 11.8 percentages of them were too busy, 11.8 percentage of this group did not find their names in the electoral rolls for which they could not vote. It is found that none of the illiterate respondents said that elections are not important for them rather they showed their interest in election as an important activity of the state. Moreover, 15.5 percentage of the respondents with primary level of education said that they could not vote due to the illness, 4.9

percentage of them were busy with their business, 14.6 percentage of this group did not find their names in the electoral rolls. However, only 3 percentage of the respondents educated with secondary and higher secondary level education could not vote because their illness. Only 8.7 percentages were too busy, 16.3 percentages of them did not find their names in the electoral roll and 4.3 percentages of these respondents had not any interest in the electoral process. The respondents having education of degree and above level responded to the question in the following way – none of them remained absent in the election due to illness, 12.2 percentage of them were too busy for which they were not able to cast their votes in the election. Only 22.0 percentage of this group could not find their names recorded in the electoral rolls, 2.4 percentages of them showed no interest in election and election related activities.

**Table 5.18: Reasons for Non-Participation (Education)**

Reasons for absence in voting	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree/ above</b>	<b>Others Specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
Could not vote because I was ill	29.4%	15.5%	13.0%	0.0	3.8%	13.1%
Because I was too busy	11.8%	4.9%	8.7%	12.2%	0.0	7.3%
My name was not in the electoral roll	11.8%	14.6%	16.3%	22.0%	15.4%	15.9%
Elections are not important enough to make me bother to vote	0.0	1.5%	4.3%	2.4%	7.7%	3.2%
No	47.1%	63.6%	57.7%	63.4%	73.1%	60.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Study

- **Factors Influencing in Selecting a Party**

There are many factors in electoral democracy, which shape mind-set of the people in support of a political party or a political group. In this regard, electorates may consider caste and community base of a party or local support generated by a political party or group. Sometimes some people are traditional supporters, workers or voters of a political party, which induce them to work for the party. Sometimes people derive or expect benefits for their families from a political party for which they become faithful supporters of the party. In many cases, leadership becomes an important motivation for the voters to support a particular political party. Among other factors party agenda, program and manifesto gather good deal of interest in support of a party. An analysis in this regard is made with the help of table no 5.19 cited below consisting data generated through field study

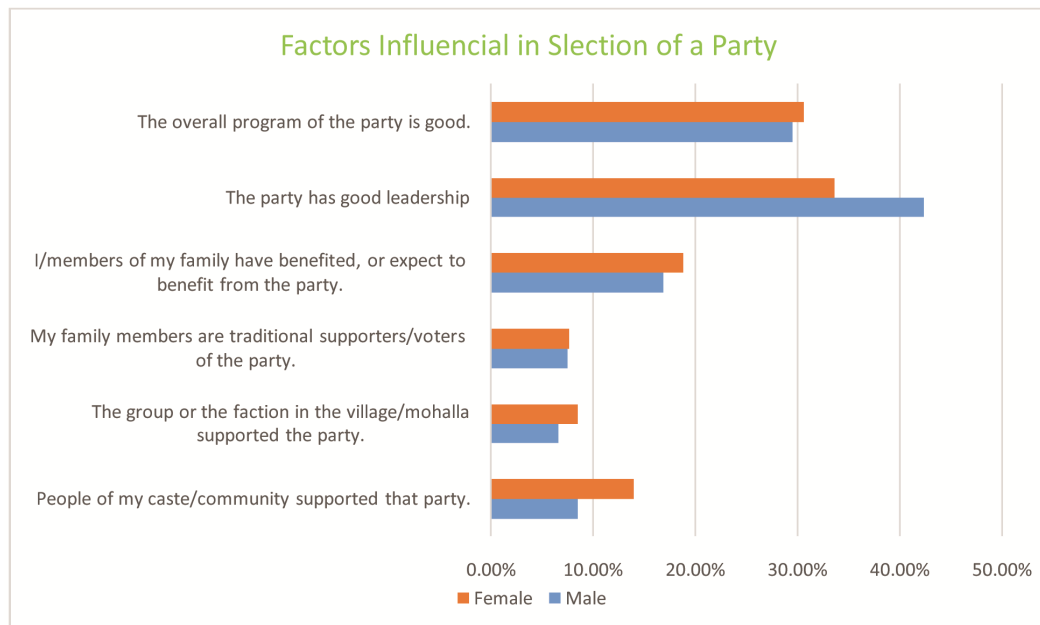
**Table 5.19: Factors Influencing in Selecting a Party (Gender)**

Factors that influence electorates' choice in selecting a party	Male	Female	Total
People of my caste/community supported that party.	8.5%	14.05	11.0%
The group or the faction in the village/Mohalla supported the party.	6.6%	8.5%	7.5%
My family members are traditional supporters/voters of the party.	7.5%	7.7%	7.6%
I/members of my family have benefited, or expect to benefit from the party.	16.9%	18.8%	17.8%
The party has good leadership	42.3%	33.6%	38.3%
The overall program of the party is good.	29.5%	30.6%	30.0%

Source: Field Study

The data reveals the fact that 89 percentages of the total respondents do not select a political party for having same caste and community support, only 11 percentages of the respondents considered a political party based on these criteria.

**Figure: 5.12 Factors Influential in Selection of Party**



Clustered Bar-Diagram Shows the factors influential in choosing a candidate during the election

Moreover, 92.5 percentages do not support a party as their locality and village community support the party. Only 7.5 percentages took this factor as important to support a political group. 92.4 percentage of the total respondents stated that their family are not traditional supporters or voters of any political party, only 7.6 percentages said that were benefited. In the survey, it was found that 82.2 percentage of the respondents said that they did not derived any benefit from any political party before and during the election, which encourage them to vote in the elections. On the other hand, 17.8 percentages of these respondents acknowledged that they derived some benefits from a political party for which they become the supporters of it. More than 61 percentage of the respondents said that leadership was not an important factor to support a political party; on the other hand, 38.3 percentages gave credit to the leadership of a political party, which may encourage or discourage the voters to support the party. Out of the total respondents, 70 percentages of respondents find that

party agenda programme is of no importance while deciding to support a political party. Thirty percentages identified the overall programme of the party as determining factor to attract people towards the party.

- **Issues before Lok Sabha and Assembly Elections in Assam**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, some broad issues always influence the voters in particular election at macro level. During the survey, the respondents were requested to identify certain issues, which influenced them the most in the previous assembly and parliamentary elections. After two consecutive rule of the Congress party at the centre and three terms in Assam, opposition parties criticized Congress on certain issues; particularly BJP appealed the voters to vote for change to make the state and the nation corruption free for development. BJP and its allies tried to mobilize the voters to change the Congress regime for its miss governance, rampant corruption and lack of development activities in Assam. For the first time after 1985, the issue of immigration was placed before the voters by the BJP and its alliance in a bold and strategic way. Respondents' reactions on these issues are presented with an interpretation in Table no 5.20.

**Table 5.20: Issues before Elections (Gender)**

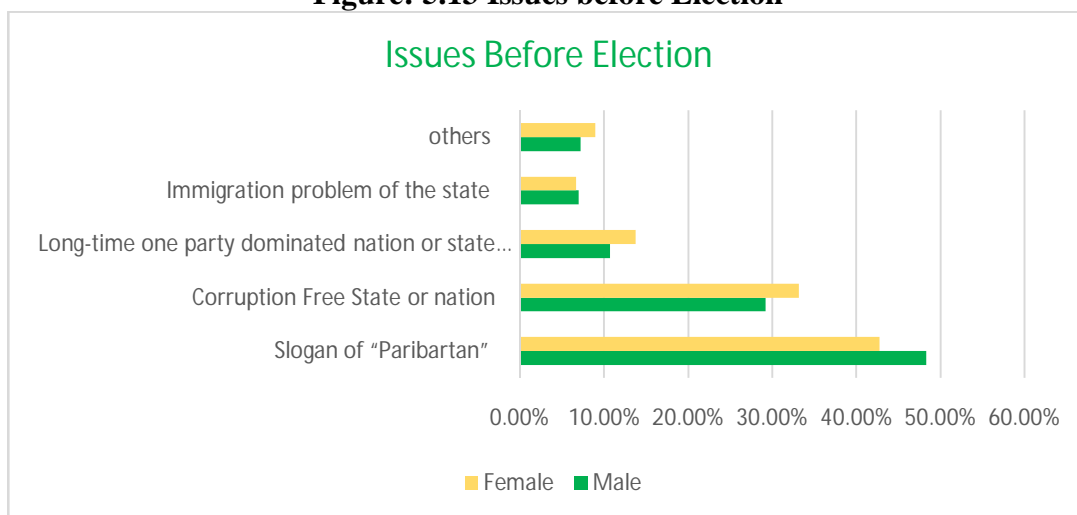
Issues before Elections	Male	Female	Total
Slogan of "Paribartan"	48.3%	42.8%	45.8%
Corruption Free State or nation	29.2%	33.2%	31.0%
Long-time one party dominated nation or state to free	10.7%	13.7%	12.0%
Immigration problem of the state	6.9%	6.6%	6.8%
others	7.2%	8.9%	8.0%

Source: Field Study

From table 5.20 it can be found that 45.8 percentage respondents were motivated by the slogan of "Change". Out of them 48.3 percentage were males and 42.8 percentage

were females. It was 31 percentage of the respondents were influenced by the issue of corruption out of them 29.2 percentage were 33.3 percentage were females. For 12 percentages of the respondents consisting 10.7 percentage of males and 13.7 percentage of females' anti-incumbency factor was more important issue. Only 6.8 percentages of the respondents were influence by the issue of immigration and 8 percentages were influence by other factors or issues in the general elections.

**Figure: 5.13 Issues before Election**



Clustered Bar-Diagram Shows Issues before Election in Jorhart District

In the table no **5.21** the following issues were cross-verified with the respondents' level of education the subsequent results were found.

**Table - 5.21 Issues Before Elections (Education)**

Issues before general elections	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric /HS</b>	<b>Degree and above</b>	<b>Others Specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
Slogan of “Paribartan”	35.3%	38.8%	51.3%	51.2%	34.6%	45.8%
Corruption Free State or nation	52.9%	33.0%	28.3%	31.7%	30.8%	31.0%
Long-time one party dominated nation or state to free	11.8%	13.1%	11.7%	12.2%	7.7%	12.0%
Immigration problem of the state	0%	8.7%	6.3%	2.4%	7.7%	6.85
others	0%	10.2%	6.0%	4.9%	23.1%	8.0%

Source: Field Study

It is observed from the above table that 35.3 percentage illiterate respondents were motivated by the slogan of “Parivartan” (Change). Along with 38.8 percentage of the respondents with primary level of education were influenced by the mega slogan of Parivartan, along with 51.2 percentage of the respondents secondary and higher secondary level of education and 51.2 percentage of the respondents with degree and above level of education were motivated by the slogan of “Change”. Corruption was the main issue before the election for more than 52.9 percentage of illiterate respondents. On an average 11 to 13 percentage respondents were influenced by anti-establishment wave during the last assembly election. The problem of immigration was not a big issue for most of the respondents from different educational level. Maximum of 8.7 percentages considered it an issue before the election.

- **People’s Perception about Democracy and Election**

To make democracy substantive participation and representation of both majority and minority communities are essential. Majority community considers most of the time



democracy as a rule. In such a situation, the minority communities remain unrepresented or less represented. To get some idea about people's perception on this some statements were put before the respondents during the survey, which are, reflected in the table no 5.22. It observed that 75.5 percentage of males and 74.2 percentages of female respondents agreed to the statement that in democracy the will of the majority community should prevail. On the other hand, 21.3 percentages of males and 23.2 percentages of female respondents disagreed to it. Another statement before the respondents was whether the reservation based on caste and religion divides the people of India. 49.5 percentage males and 45.4 percentage females agreed to the statement whereas 46.7 males and 52.8 percentage females disagreed to it.

**Table 5.22: Democracy and Election (Gender)**

		Male	Female	Total
Majority rule in Democracy	Agree	75.5%	74.2%	74.9%
	Disagree	21.3%	23.2%	22.2%
	Strongly	1.3%	.4%	.8%
	Somewhat	1.9%	2.2%	2.0%
Caste basis of reservation	Agree	49.5%	45.4%	47.6%
	Disagree	46.7%	52.8%	49.5
	Strongly	2.5%	1.1%	1.9%
	Somewhat	1.3%	.7%	1.0%
Special provision for Minorities	Agree	48.0%	50.6%	49.2%
	Disagree	45.5%	44.3%	44.9%
	Strongly	4.1%	3.7%	3.9%
	Somewhat	2.5%	1.5%	2.0%

Source: Field Study

An important statement on which respondents were requested to show their agreement and disagreement was regarding special provision to accommodate minorities by the government. It is seen that 48 percentage of males and 50 percentages of female's respondents supported that government should make some special provision to accommodate minority communities in their policy and plans. On the other hand, 45.5

percentage males and 43.3 percentage females disagreed to such provision and they said that such provision could make differences between minority and majority communities.

**Table 5.23 Democracy and Election (Education)**

	<b>Illiterate</b>		<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree and above</b>	<b>Others Specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
Majority rule in Democracy	Agree	52.9%	77.2%	72.3%	87.85	80.8%	74.9%
	Disagree	47.1%	19.9%	25.3%	2.4%	19.2%	22.2%
	Strongly	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	.8%
	Somewhat	0.0%	1.9%	1.3%	9.8%	0.0%	2.0%
Caste basis of reservation	Agree	17.6%	47.6%	48.7%	61.0%	34.6%	47.6%
	Disagree	82.4%	48.5%	48.7%	39.0%	61.5%	49.5%
	Strongly	0.0%	2.9%	1.3%	0.0%	3.8%	1.9%
	Somewhat	0.0%	1.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Special provision for Minorities	Agree	52.9%	52.9%	44.3%	63.4%	50.0%	49.2%
	Disagree	41.2%	42.2%	48.7%	31.7%	46.2%	44.9%
	Strongly	5.9%	3.9%	4.3%	0.0%	3.8%	3.9%
	Somewhat	0.0	1.0%	2.7%	4.9%	0.0%	2.0%

The table 5.23 shows the data depending on the different levels of education of the respondents. It is found that majority people from all levels of education considered that the role of majority should prevail in democracy. According to 17.6 percentage respondents the reservation based on caste and religion may divide our nation. 47.6 percentage respondents with primary level of education agreed that these kinds of reservation might lead to the division among the communities in our country. However, 48.7 percentage of respondents of secondary and higher secondary level of education and 61 percentage of respondents having degree and above level of education agreed that the caste and religion based reservation will divide our country. Majority of the respondents from different levels of education agreed that government should adopt some special provisions in their policies to accommodate minority communities of the society.

- **Methods and Instruments of Political Mobilization**

Voting is not the only activity through which one can participate in the electoral process of a democracy. People participate in the process through various other activities. Candidates and political parties try to encourage people to cast their votes in the election in favour of them through different activities. Nowadays, different methods are adopted during the election to motivate the electorates to cast their votes. Among them like door to door campaigning, contacting people through phone calls, recorded voices or SMS or by providing food to the voters are very common. Sometimes political parties or candidates offer drives to the voters of a particular locality to remote polling station. During the survey, it was tried to understand which of such methods was more influential to mobilize people to participate in the electoral process during the elections. The data is placed in the table 5.24 below.

**Table 5.24: Political Mobilization (Gender)**

Activities through which party/candidate try to mobilize voters		Male	Female	Total
Candidate/Party worker/canvasser came to your House to ask your vote	Yes	10.3%	9.6%	10.0%
	No	89.7%	90.4%	90.0%
Candidate party contact through SMS	Yes	63.0%	67.9%	65.3%
	No	36.4%	31.7%	34.2%
	Don't remember	.6%	.4%	.5%
Offering food/honorarium in your locality	Yes	60.8%	57.6%	59.3%
	No	38.9%	42.1%	40.3%
	Don't remember	.35	.4%	.3%
Candidate offering to drive	Yes	65.5%	63.5%	64.6%
	No	23.5%	26.9%	25.1%
	Don't remember	11.0%	9.6%	10.3%

Source: Field Study

It is observed from the above table that one of the most popular methods of yesteryears, the door-to-door canvassing that has gradually declined. Average 10 percentage of the total respondents said that some party worker or candidate came to

their house to request their voters in favour of them. Whereas 63 percentages of males and 67.9 percentages of female's respondents confirmed that they have been contacted by a political party/candidate through phone calls or recorded voices or SMS. 60.8 percentage male and 67.5 percentage female respondents said that they were offered food/honorarium etc. by party/candidate to get their votes in the elections. From the table it can be observed that 65.5 of males and 63.5 percentage female respondents acknowledged that they were offered drives by political party/candidate

In Table no. 5.25 education is taken as a parameter to determine the degree of motivation through different methods of political mobilization. It shows that people with all levels of education were tried to be influenced or motivated through electronic methods like phone calls, recorded voices or SMSs. It also indicates that party/candidate contacted 52.9 percentage illiterate people through this method. However, 77.2 percentage respondents with primary level of education, 56.0 percentage of the respondents with secondary and higher secondary education, 61 percentage of the respondents with degree and above level of education were tried to be influence by using electronic media by concerned party/candidate to participate in the electoral process. From this observation, it has been found that with the development of communication technology, availability of vehicles it has become easier for the candidate or the political parties to reach out the voters to motivate them to cast their votes. This is a major cause of increase of voter's turnout in the recent elections.

On an average 65.3 percentage of total respondents across all levels of education were contacted through electronic means in the recent elections. This was followed by

another traditional method adopted by the political parties to encourage the voters to cast their votes by offering honorarium, food etc. An average of 59.3 percentages of the total respondents acknowledged that they were offered food etc. by political party/candidate to cast their vote in the election. Another important method of offering drive to the voters to the polling station was also effective to almost all sections of the respondents with different levels of education. The highest percentage of respondents with degree and above level of education i.e. 78 percentages were offered drives by candidate/ party.

**Table 5.25: Political Mobilization (Education)**

Activities through which party/candidate try to mobilize voters		Illiterate	Primary	Metric /HS	Degree and above	Other Specialized	Total
Candidate/Party worker/canvasser came to your House to ask your vote	Yes	0.0%	14.6%	6.7%	12.2%	15.4%	10.0%
	No	100.0%	85.4%	93.3%	87.8%	84.6%	90.0%
Candidate party contact through SMS	Yes	52.9%	77.2%	56.0%	61.0%	92.3%	65.3%
	No	47.1%	22.8%	43.3%	36.6%	7.7%	34.2%
	Don't remember	0.0%	0.0%	.7%	2.4%	0.0%	.5%
Offering food/ honorarium in your locality	Yes	41.2%	65.5%	54.0%	68.3%	69.2%	59.3%
	No	58.8%	34.5%	45.7%	29.3%	30.8%	40.3%
	Don't remember	0.0%	0.0%	.3%	2.4%	0.0%	.3%
Candidate offering to drive	Yes	41.2%	69.4%	60.0%	78.0%	73.1%	64.6%
	No	41.2%	23.3%	27.7%	12.2%	19.2%	25.1%
	Don't remember	17.6%	7.3%	12.3%	9.8%	7.7%	10.3%

Source: Field Study

#### • Role of Money Factor in Politics

There is a common perception that electoral democracy in India is mostly controlled by money and poor people cannot influence or determine the political course of action

in our country. In this regard, a question was put before the respondents to express their opinion on the role of money and importance of poor in politics.

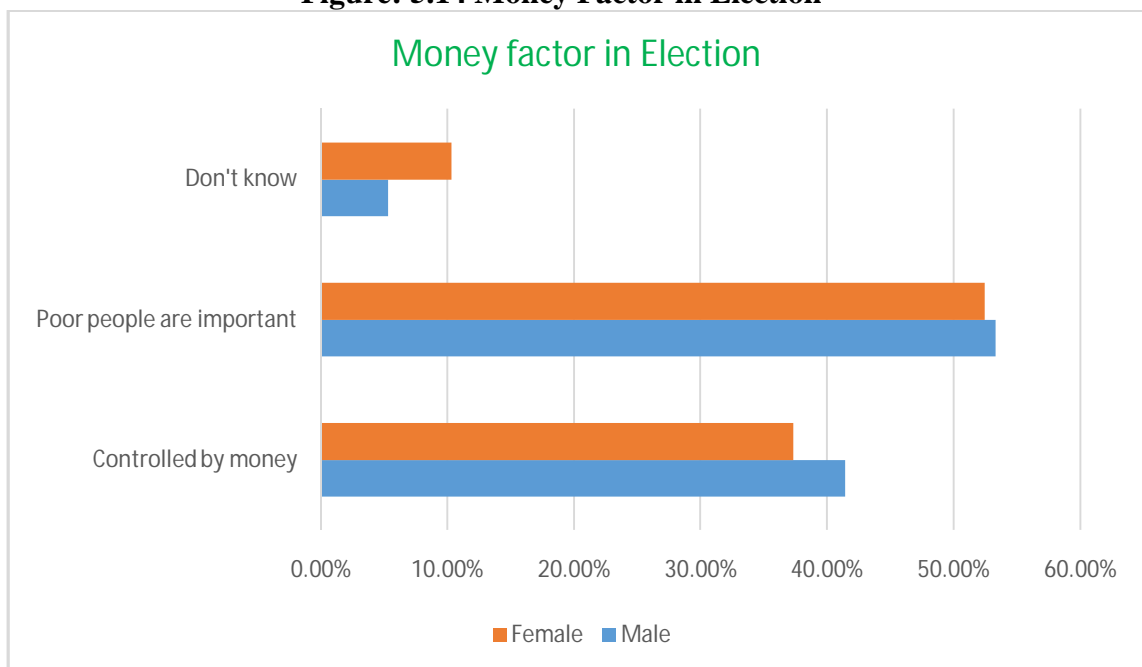
**Table 5.26: Role of Money (Gender)**

	Male	Female	Total
Controlled by money	41.4%	37.3%	39.5%
Poor people are important	53.3%	52.4%	52.9%
Don't know	5.3%	10.3%	7.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

The table 5.26 shows the responses of the respondents and it is observed that 41.4 percentage male and 37.7 percentage female believe that politics is mostly controlled by money. On the other hand, 53.5 males' percentage and 52.4 females believe that poor people are also important in politics.

**Figure: 5.14 Money Factor in Election**



Clustered Bar-Diagram Shows the Importance of Money during the Election

**Table 5.27: Role of Money (Education)**

	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree and above</b>	<b>Other Speciali zed</b>	<b>Total</b>
Controlled by money	64.7%	38.3%	38.3%	53.7%	23.1%	39.5%
Poor people are important	17.6%	55.8%	52.0%	43.9%	76.9%	52.9%
Don't know	17.6%	5.8%	9.7%	2.4%	0.0%	7.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

Perception of people about politics is cross analysed by the level of education of the respondents in the table number 5.27, The analysis indicates that 64.7 percentage of illiterate people believe that money controls politics while only 17.6 percentage of them believe that poor people are also important. 38.3 percentage of the respondents having primary level of education believe that politics is controlled by money and 55.8 percentage of them consider poor people are also important in politics. If we look at the highly educated people, we see that 38.3 percentage respondents with secondary and higher secondary education and 53.7 with degree and above level of education consider that money controls politics. On the other hand, 52.0 percentage and 53.9 percentage of this group of respondents believe that poor people are also important in politics.

In the survey at grass root level it has become evident that a remarkable number of people still believe that money factor has influence in politics.

- **Factors that Influence the Choice of Electorates in Elections**

The choices of electorates are influenced by many factors while voting. Sometimes the political party itself or the quality of the candidate or the religion of the candidate influences the voters largely. During the survey, it was seen that a political party out of which 32.9 percentages were males influenced 33.6 percentage respondents and

34.3 percentages were females. Nevertheless, a large number of electorates look into the qualities of a candidate while casting their votes. The data in the table 5.28 shows that 67.1 of percentage of males and 64.9 percentages of females to a total of 66.1 percentage respondents considered qualities of the candidate while casting their votes.

**Table 5.28: Factors Influencing the Choice of Electorates (Gender)**

Factors influence the choice of electorates	Male	Female	Total
Political party	32.9%	34.3%	33.6%
Qualities of candidate	67.1%	64.9%	66.1%
Religion of the candidate	0.0%	.7%	.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

However, religion of the candidate as a factor was of negligible importance before the electorates. It can be observed that quality of a candidate is given first preference compared to political parties and other factors during the election.

- **Importance of Election in Democracy**

In any democracy, holding of regular elections is important to change and to form a new government. Through election, an individual or a group of people can directly participate in selection of their representatives. Regular and periodic election with higher participation of voters makes democracy more functional and substantive. In the survey, it was tried to observe whether electorates have faith in the election as a means to form government. The data inserted in the table no 5.29 clearly indicates that more than 85 percentages of the electorates believe that government should be formed through the election not by other methods or means. This has been a general opinion of the respondents from various ages with different level of education.



**Table 5.29: Importance of Election (Gender)**

Is election important for democracy?	Male	Female	Total
No	11.9%	9.35	10.75
If no, what is the reason	2.2%	5.2%	3.6%
If yes, which method should be adopted	85.9%	85.6%	85.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

- **Caste and Community Factor in Election**

It has been an established fact that in Indian situation caste is an important force that influences political decisions. The lack of homogeneity in Indian population causes division between different social sections based on religion, region, language, caste and ethnicity. This has led to rise in the commitment of political parties in their agenda to accommodate one or more social groups. Election outcome are always influenced by diversity of population in terms of ethnicity and social caste. To know the electorates minds regarding caste and community influence the respondents were asked whether they had been aware of the caste of the candidate while voting. The result is presented in the table no 5.30 below.

**Table 5.30: Caste and Community Factor (Gender)**

	Male	Female	Total
No	29.8%	30.6%	30.2%
Yes	70.2%	69.4%	69.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

The table above shows that the respondents were well aware of the caste of the candidate they had voted. However, they had not directly disclosed that they vote by looking at the caste of the candidate. More than 70.2 percentages of male respondents and 69.4-percentage female average 69.8 of the total respondents said that they knew the caste of the candidate they had voted in the election. When the data was verified with the respondents with different levels of education it was seen that highly

educated individuals also considered caste as an important parameter for choosing a candidate to vote in the election.

**Table 5.31: Caste and Community Factors (Education)**

	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree and above</b>	<b>Other Specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	11.8%	29.1%	31.7%	36.6%	23.1%	30.2%
Yes	88.2%	70.9%	68.3%	63.4%	76.9%	69.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

The table no 5.31 reveals that 63.4 percentages of the total respondents with degree and above level of education even knew or tried to know the caste of the candidate while exercising their right to vote.

- **People’s Perception about Voting**

Though voting is a political right, different people have different perceptions about it. For somebody it is a matter of pride and prestige to cast vote in the elections. In our society many people cast their votes to get personal benefits. Somebody cast their votes to get an access to the newly elected government and some other caste the vote to protect their individual rights and identity. To understand importance of voting for the voters the respondents were asked to express their feeling about the act of to vote in elections. The responses of the respondents are presented in the following table no 5.32. Average 94.9 percentage of respondents considered that it was necessary to vote in the elections. It is a good sign for democracy and because of such mind-set of the people in the recent years the polling percentage has been substantially increased and electoral politics have become more competitive. This are considering good for the health of a democracy.

**Table 5.32 Perception of Voting (Gender)**

	Male	Female	Total
No	4.7%	5.5%	5.1%
Yes	95.3%	94.5%	94.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

- **Leadership and Party**

Leadership plays an important role in influencing the voters to cast vote for a political party. On many occasions, electorates prefer to vote for a strong leader irrespective of any party. A leader who can represent them in proper way by addressing different issues faced by the common people. In the survey, a question was put before the respondents whether they always voted in favour of a party to which their leader belonged. The result is presented in the following table no 5.33

**Table 5.33: Leadership and Party (Gender)**

	Male	Female	Total
No	57.4%	62.0%	59.5%
Yes	42.6%	38.0%	40.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

From the above table it is observed that 42.6 percentages of males and 38.0 percentage females, total aggregate of 40.5 percentage respondents responded positively and they said that they voted for their leader not for a party. Through this, it is understood that the question of leadership has become important in considerable way.

- **How People Accept a Leader after Changing a Party**

Although leadership issue always has been a significant factor in election but it is seen that most of the parties have their own traditional support base. Most of the electorates always like to see their leader in the party they support. During the survey, respondents were requested to give their views on if their leader changes the political

party and joins a new one will they continue to vote for the leader. Result is represented in the table 5.34.

**Table 5.34: Change of Party by Leader (Gender)**

	Male	Female	Total
No	81.2%	85.2%	83.1%
Yes	18.8%	14.8%	16.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

From the above table, it is seen that only 16.9 percentage of the total respondents said that they would change their party if their leader changes it. On the other hand, 83 percentage of the respondents said that they would continue to remain in the same party and would not change it with their leader. From this statistics, we can draw a conclusion that leaders may lose support from the supporter if he or she changes the political party, but there may be some exception in an unusual or exceptional situation.

- **Major factors that influence the Elections in Jorhat district**

To find out the decisive factors in the election politics of Jorhat district in Assam the respondents were asked to give their views on certain factors. The responses are given in categories under the following broad heads.

**Table 5.35 Factors Influencing Elections in Jorhat (Gender)**

Major factors that influence the politics of Jorhat district	Male	Female	Total
Community factor	29.8%	35%	32.2%
Money factor	11.3%	7.4%	9.5%
Unemployment issue	28.8%	30.3%	29.5%
Underdevelopment	25.7%	26.6%	26.1%
Community factor & money factor	46.4%	45.0%	45.8%
Unemployment & corruption	53.3%	58.7%	55.8%
Underdevelopment & community	17.9%	24.7%	21.0%
Illegal Immigration/insurgency	20.3%	17.7%	19.1%

Source: Filed Study

Table no 5.34 reveals the fact that 32.2 percentages of the total respondents consider community factor influential in the election of the Jorhat district. This community factor can be defined as caste factor, tribal factor, tea tribes' factor, etc. It is a fact that several socio- economic demographic factors have influences in one or more constituencies in the district therefore party and candidate give priority to these factors during election.

The multi-ethnic composition of the population of the district has been discussed in previous Chapter IV of this research work. Both the constituencies chosen for survey in the district of Jorhat was diverse in terms of caste and community. In Teok, dominance of OBC community and Tea tribes is visible. On the other hand, the voters of Tea tribe's community have dominated politics of Mariani constituency. In this way community factor plays a major role in the politics of the district.

The second factor, which was placed before the respondents, was the role of money in election. It is observed that only 9.5 percentages of the respondents are of the view that the money factor plays some role in determining elections outcome of the district. The issue of unemployment also plays a significant role in Indian politics. In Assam, all the political parties and candidates try to commit the people to create employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled and educated unemployed youths before the elections. In the survey 29.5 percentage of the respondents said that this issue has relevance in politics of Jorhat district.

Underdevelopment has remained as one of the crucial election issues for most of the elections held in both the centre and the state. Slogan of development has been one of the major agendas of political parties in election. In the survey, 26.1 percentage of the respondents raised development as an important issue in the politics of Jorhat district.

Sometimes not a single-issue but multiple issues play an important role in influencing the voters mind during the election. Both community and monetary factor are too sensitive as election issues. When this two were clubbed and placed before the respondents for the opinion, interestingly 45.8 percentage of the respondent has viewed these two factors together as playing influential roles in determining the electoral politics of the district.

Likewise, when combined another two issues of socio economic importance, corruption and unemployment to see the responses of the respondents and highest number of 55.8 percentages of respondents identified these two factors very significant in the electoral politics of the district.

Two diverse issues underdevelopment and community were placed before the respondents as factors influencing the political behaviour of the people of Jorhat district and 21 percentage of the total respondents identified these two issues influential in determining the elections of the district.

Some of the burning issues of Assam like illegal immigration, insurgency etc. which have been supposed to be of utmost influence in the recent elections of the state were put before the respondents in the survey and interestingly only 18.6 percentage of the respondents identified these issues as important influence during the elections to determine its outcome in the district.

From the above analysis, it is seen that community factor is one of the major factors, which remained in politics of the district for a long period and most of the politicians and political parties tried to polarize the voters in the line of their communities. In the recent election, corruption and unemployment were two major issues more than 50%

of the total respondents believed that these two issues worked very significantly to determine the politics of the district in recent elections.

- **Participation of Electorates in Non-Voting Activities**

Apart from voting there are many other activities through which people /electorates take part in the electoral process, like attending election meetings and rallies, participating in procession or street plays, helping the candidate or the party in door to door canvassing, contribution or collection of money to help candidate or political party, distribution of leaflets or putting up poster etc. are considered as important. These are activities non-voting activities during the elections. Many people participate in the electoral process through these activities. To observe the involvement of people in such activities every individual respondent was asked to reply in which of these he or she had participated during the election. The trend of such participation of people is presented in the table no 5.36.

**Table 5.36 Participation of Electorates in Non-Voting Activities (Gender)**

<b>Participation of people in nonvoting activities</b>		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Attended election meetings/rallies	No	84.6%	81.9%	83.4%
	Yes	15.4%	18.1%	16.6%
Participated in processions/street plays	No	50.2%	34.7%	43.1%
	Yes	49.8%	65.3%	56.9%
Participated in door to door canvassing	No	20.7%	8.5%	15.1%
	Yes	79.3%	91.5%	84.9%
Contributed or collected money	No	8.8%	3.3%	6.3%
	Yes	91.2%	96.7%	93.7%
Distributed election leaflets or put up posters	No	29.8%	12.2%	21.7%
	Yes	70.2%	87.8%	78.3%

Source: Filed Study

From the above table, it can be seen that only 15.4 percentage of male and 18 percentage of female, average 16.6 percentages of the total respondents attended election meetings or rallies. On the other hand, 49.8 percentage of male 60.3 and

percentage of female a total average of 56.9 percentage respondents participated in procession or street plays which were organized by candidates or political parties. Number of respondents told that they had helped candidate or a political party in door to door canvassing. 79.3 percentage of males and 91.5 percentages of females and 84.9 percentage respondents participated in these activities. A good number of respondents said that they had distributed leaflets and put up poster during the elections to help some candidates or party. 70.2 percentage males and 87.8 percentage females out of total 78.3 percentage respondents were involved in this activity. It is very significant to observe that a highest number of 91.2 percentage males and 96.7 percentage females and out of the total 93.7 percentage respondents either collected or contributed money towards some political party in the election. From this, it becomes evident that money has always been playing a crucial role in the elections.

- **Peoples' Participation in Decision Making**

Apart from direct participation of the people in the electoral process through both voting and non-voting activities, many people tried to influence the decision making of the government through different media. People may express their views by writing in newspaper or by participating in the talk shows/discussions on TV or Radio on certain issues or on the decisions taken by the government.

Public meetings are another important medium for creation of public opinion on certain issues and many people express their views through these meeting. Recently, there has been increasing popularity of social media as a medium of expressing views and creating public awareness or opinion. In spite of all this, popular mediums of creation of public opinion many people do not or cannot use these to express their views.



To understand the involvement and interest of the people to express their views through different media an attempt was made during the study. Different Media through which public opinion can be created were placed before the respondents to know their views. For this purpose, option of “not interested to discuss” was also given to them. The findings of this investigation are presented in the table 5.37.

**Table 5.37: Peoples’ Participation in Decision Making (Gender)**

<b>Media</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Newspaper/TV, Radio	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%
In public meeting	35.6%	18.8%	28.1%
Not interested to discuss	53.9%	76%	64.1%
Social media	9.1%	3.7%	6.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Filed Study

The table no. 5.37 presented above shows that a very negligible number of respondents express or discuss their views through print, electronic and social media. More than 35.6 percentages of males and 18.8 percentages of females and average of 28.1 percentages of total respondents participated and expressed their views on the public meetings. A total number of 64.1 percentage respondents were not interested to discuss or express their views in public and social media.

From this result, it is observed that most of the common people are not interested in expressing their views through debated and discussion on certain issues in social media.

- **Membership of Political Party**

In the previous discussion, it was stated that people could participate in the electoral and political process through lot many ways. Some of them are direct and some are indirect. Many people involve themselves in the politics by taking party membership or occupying party office to directly influence party’s political decision on different

issues. It is a kind of gladiatorial activities in the electoral process. To know the respondent's belongingness of political party a direct question was put to them respondents during the survey to know their party membership. The results were presented in the table below:

**Table 5.38: Party Membership (Gender)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	29.2%	47.6%	37.6%
Yes	70.8%	52.4%	62.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

The above table shows that 70.8 percentages of males and 52.4 percentages of females said they have party membership. A total number of 62.4 respondents belong to a political party. It indicates that more than 60 percentages of the total respondents have direct involvement with politics.

Some families are traditional supporters of some political party. Member of such families inherit a party affiliation for generations. It is because of involvement with a party from the beginning of its existence. During the survey, an effort was made to see the involvement of electorates in some political party from their family perspective. To understand the trend of such support a question was put up before every respondent whether he or she belonged or supported any party to which their parents did not.

**Table 5.39: Family Background of Party Support**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	55.8%	72.0%	63.2%
If yes, what is the reason	44.2%	28.0%	36.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

The table no. 5.39 shows that 63.2 percentage of the respondents said that they belonged to same party to which their parents belonged. On the other hand, 36.8 percentages of the respondents have affiliation to a party in which their parents were not. It indicates that many people are still traditionally support of some political party their parents or ancestors belonged.

**Table: - 5.40 Party Affiliation and Family (Education)**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Illiterate</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Metric/ HS</b>	<b>Degree and above</b>	<b>Other Specialized</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	82.4%	64.6%	63.3%	31.7%	88.5%	63.2%
If yes, what is the reason	17.6%	35.4%	36.7%	68.3%	11.5%	36.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Filed Study

When data was cross-verified taking education as variable as placed in table 5.40, it is seen that more people with higher-level support or belong to a political party to which their parents did not. It indicates that people with higher education gradually becomes more conscious and make their individual decision and preferences while choosing a political party in electoral process.

### **5.3 Major Findings**

Based on the above analysis of data following major findings were formulated: -

- A majority of the respondents are motivated to cast votes or participate in the electoral process by some individual benefits derived during the elections. The highly educated voters are not exception to it. These personal benefits may be clothes or money, for illiterate voters, it may be jobs or employment for highly educated ones.

- Individual behaviour of a voter is largely influenced by his/her friends and neighbours. Many voters obtain suggestion in selecting a candidate or a party during the election regularly.
- Caste and community are major consideration before large number of electorates in choosing a candidate to vote. Many of the voters either know or try to know the caste and community of a candidate before casting votes. Elections outcomes are also generally determining by caste and community factors.
- Background of a candidate in terms of social services attracts many voters towards him or her during the election. In this regard, educational qualification and political experience are given less importance.
- A good number of electorates choose a political party looking at leadership and many times, they cast their votes for the party because of their strong leadership.
- Voters are motivated by mega slogan propagated by political parties during the election not by core issues confronted by the society at various levels.
- The significant increase in people's participation in the elections is not because of large mobilisation of the people in terms of mega rally's or long processions but because of persuasion of the political parties or candidates at the individual level by using different electronic media like recorded voice messages, phone calls or SMS, etc. The modern technology has played a major role in mobilising voters at the individual level in recent election.

- In spite of all possible restrictions imposed by election conducting machineries to reduce election expenses of a candidates and political parties, money still plays a very significant role in determining electoral politics.
- More than 85 percentages of people still believe on elections as means to change or form a government. In spite of criticism about the quality of election, people still have faith in it.
- Both unemployment and corruption were major issues before the voters during the last elections in Jorhat district, which were followed by community and money factors.
- Majority of the electorates support a political party by becoming members to it. Highly educated people take more party membership compared to less educated or illiterate people.
- Apart from voting many people involve them self in the electoral process through a number of nonvoting activities like attending election meetings and rallies, participating in procession and street plays, helping party or candidate in door to door canvassing, contribution or collection of money for party or candidate, distribution of election leaflets and putting up poster etc.
- Modern technologies are coming up in a big way to influence or motivate people for their participation in the electoral process.
- The role of religion as a factor is very negligible compare to other factor in the district of Jorhat.

## **CHAPTER VI**

# **CONCLUSION**

Democracy was never there in the India's socio economic political life in the past. People of India were introduced to it only in the colonial and the post-colonial periods. However, the country has failed to accept the style of liberal western democracy because of its complex socio political structure. In spite of all adverse socio-economic and cultural conditions, democracy started embracing Indian society with a gradual pace. Democracy has been institutionalized in the country notwithstanding its enormous differences in terms of culture, ethnicity, religion, language etc. Indian society further divided in terms of economic inequalities and regional disparities. Under such circumstances, many people were not optimistic about the future of Indian democracy. However, in spite of these shortcomings, predications and speculations democracy started in its institutional form with procedural velocity. Success of institutional and procedural democracy in India mainly can be attributed to the holding of regular election in national, provincial and local levels both in the colonial and postcolonial periods.

There has been a gradual transformation of Indian democracy from its elitist nature to mass political mobilization of the people. This transition has been possible only because of periodical elections that are held at various, levels with regular and stipulated intervals. Noted historian and writer Dr. Ramachandra Guha has described "Indian democracy's 70 years a 50-50 success story" in his speech made at Jammu during the 2017 Balraj Puri memorial lecture. As far as political democracy is

concerned, India's greatest achievement has been holding free and fair elections whereas on the negative side there have been increasing curbs on freedom of expression and a decline in the autonomy of public institutions," Mr. Guha said (Special Correspondent, The Hindu, updated on 8 August, 2017)

Another important development of Indian democracy is the emergence of different political parties both at national and state level other than Congress and other national parties, which stepped into India politics during the freedom struggle or just after the country's independence in 1947. Existence of various parties representing different social groups, regions and issues has made the Indian politics more competitive. There has been growth and decay of many political parties during the post independence period. Mainly two broad phases of party system in India can be observed. The first phase is characterized by one-party dominance with moderate participation and elitist consensus. The second phase is characterized by greater democratization with opening up of political system to non elite participants.

Election plays a vital role in a democratic country and provides an opportunity for its citizens to make a choice on the political representation they want. From a local election, to a national election electorates are given the choices to elect their representative to form a new government. Only a democratic state offers such an opportunity to its citizens. Only a democratic state offers this possibility. Contribution of democracy is also reflected in the provision of political stability. It gives opportunity for ordinary people to open the political space for criticism and peaceful transition of power. At the same time, it has to be remembered that in a democracy with low literacy level with less politically aware population proper functioning cannot be carried out in a realistic way. Before making a conclusion of the study, it is

felt that the following few observations if taken care of would do well to the future elections in the State.

Indian society is composed of a highly diverse population divided on the lines of religion, caste, region, language, ethnicity, history, etc. Further, it is divided in terms of literacy and education, economic status, tradition and modern ideologies and with individuals and varying groups struggling to accommodate these differences again diverse ways. In such a scenario, co-habitation and interaction among groups and individuals become possible with one resultant consequence being conflict and this involves utilizing differences to improve one's position in terms of power and status.

The electoral system of India is a set-up that is marred by these factors inhibiting the process of achieving a democratic situation, yet resilient enough to continue in its process with this baggage towards empowering the system in democratizing the people and the system in itself. The interplay of these factors have produced major factors as lack of ideology of the political parties and of the active players, lack of voter accountability, criminalization of politics, fragmented electorate and politics, utilizing mass media before the elections to unduly influence voters, illiteracy and political illiteracy, nature of voters' participation, an educated urban population growing ambivalent to electoral politics, several facets of the way the elections are conducted that the true opinion of the electorate is hardly reflected in the election results, etc. These issues basically centre round financial matters, operational matters, media and political literacy

Indian democracy has been changing its nature. Earlier there was a top to bottom approach where party or leaders recruited new leaders to fill up vacant spaces. Gradually individuals with popular support from different groups and regions started



coming to politics with different issues. The political parties are inducting most of such leader, put them as candidates in the elections to gain more seats and vote share. Many of such leaders fight elections as independent candidates and later they try to bargain with a prospective political party to be in the government.

Moreover, Indian democracy has been confronted with some of the most undemocratic issues like communalization and criminalization of politics. Religious sentiment is one of the forceful factors in the politics of the country. The politicians try to polarize the electorates in the name of region, religion, ethnicity, language, caste etc. to put curtain on the fundamental issues related to the lives of common people.

Another important aspect of Indian electoral democracy is the vote bank politics. The politicians and parties often try to motivate people in groups united by some sentiment or feeling during an electoral process. In such a system, power brokers are created as mediators between the political party or leader and the group. Though there has been gradual decline in this direction yet this type of politics still exists in many parts of the country.

It is observed that electoral politics in India is largely influenced by money factor and question of personal benefits. A large number of electorates cast their votes anticipating some personal benefits, which becomes one of the major weaknesses of our democracy.

In our country, the political parties and leaders formulate agenda or make promises to the people during the elections just to be in power. They rarely try to be in power to implement their agenda or to meet the promises. The people do not have any option left but to wait for the next election to come.

Indian electoral politics has always been a matter of uncertainty. The politician and parties make utmost use of this opportunity to win the electoral battle. They always target the common underprivileged, uneducated or less educated masses and put them into some uncertain situations with lots of promises and commitments to different sections of people who are already divided in the line of caste, community, religion, ethnicity, languages and region etc. On the top they are burdened with some big slogans as mentioned earlier. Under such circumstances, the electorates fail to take appropriate decision at the right time.

In spite of all these major challenges one of the most significant strength of Indian democracy is the growing participation of the people particularly in the electoral process. Though there has been gradual growth people's participation in the electoral process but the recent elections show very encouraging turnouts. However, it is a procedural front of democracy. Most of the time Indian democracy is centered on the electoral politics in which democracy revives and celebrated only during the elections with multi-dimensional ways.

In respect of substantive or qualitative democracy, our country is far behind. Democracy could not be confined merely to formation of a government through procedures, institutions or by regularly held elections. It needs to be a government of the people by the people and for the people as pronounced by Abraham Lincon, the former president of USA. Democracy should be a social order and a way of life. This order and the life style should be there from the very basic unit of social structure to the state as a whole. Quality of democracy cannot be testified only through participation or representation in the electoral process. Beyond this, Indian democracy

should stand for equality, freedom, rule of Law, majority rule for protection of minority rights, compromising individual interest for societal goods etc. in true sense.

As mentioned above the present democratic system of India is revolved around the electoral politics, which indicates only the procedural progression. In qualitative and substantive front, there are miles to go. It is seen that the democratic values are still to reach out the grass root levels to address the fundamental issues relating to the rights of minority, underprivileged sections of the society, women empowerment, children rights etc. However, the constitutional and legal provisions are being constantly under up gradation in this direction.

The present research work that has been presented in the proceeding chapter gives an understanding of the electoral politics and political participation in the state of Assam as a federal unit of the union of India. The main objectives of the study are to examine and determine the factors instrumental during an electoral process to set some trend both in terms of participation of the people and electoral outcomes. It is not easy to point out a single factor as the determinant responsible for a particular trend in the electoral politics in a country like India with diverse socio-economic background. It is more complex in case of state like Assam with multi ethnic, multi religious, multi linguistic with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Assam is unique in various ways so far as its electoral political scenario is concerned. It was annexed to the British Empire in India quite late compared to most other states. Moreover, since its annexation in 1826, there had been continuous attempts at its independence. Assam was under the rule of the Ahoms who had entered Assam from Burma in the East during the mid-thirteenth century. Ahoms were a tribal group of great Mongoloid race belonging to the Tai group of people. They had migrated

originally from Thailand through China and Upper Burma. Therefore, they were quite unaware of the operation of the pristine caste system as prevalent in the heart of mainland India. As tribal people, they were originally egalitarian and had no prior knowledge of the Caste system per se at the time when they had conquered the kingdoms of other tribes and communities. Although they had embraced Hinduism in later years, caste system in Assam remained less rigid and much flexible as compared to many other states. Untouchability has never been a major issue, never institutionalized and was never rigid if at all practiced in a limited way.

The socio-political and economic order of greater Assam subsequently divided, as seven sisters were never resemblance with the rest of the country. Before the Burmese aggression, Assam was never invaded by any foreign force. Since then gradual invasion was started in the present North Eastern parts of the country. The entire region had ethno-legal culture ruled by native rulers. Every community and tribal groups had their own customary laws for self-governance. The kingdoms that ruled in different parts of the region had their own principles of law. The societies were mostly based on agricultural economy with strict division of labour in both the family and societal levels. People lived in communities having their own geographical territories. It was a kind of egalitarian society having their own style of living with their own style of polity, economy, culture, religion, customs, traditions, rituals and medium of communications. After independence, there has been gradual emergence of socio political forces that have come in to the region by making concurrence with the traditional ethnic, social and religious forces.

Right from the very inception of Assam as a federal political unit in the post independent India, the state has been fighting with lots of problem. Most important

among than is the struggle for safeguard of identity among different ethnic groups. Moreover, Assam has been a volatile place for many uprising and movements with both violent and nonviolent affiliations.

Starting from anti British uprising in the colonial periods to anti grouping movement, language movement, anti-foreigner movement (Assam Agitation), refinery movement to movement against big dams, peoples' movements protection of different rights of indigenous people, the people of the state have been fighting causes to get justice either from the state or from national political authorities.

Besides all these movements having affiliation to non-violent methodology, the violent movements by NSCN, MNF, ULFA, PLA, NDFB, BLT etc., which have been demanding either separate state or sovereign state in the north eastern became an influential factor in the electoral politics of whole of North East India including Assam.

Assam's multi ethnic character has also been responsible for shaping its culture of give and take as well as living together of common people in harmony for long periods in history. These have definitely influenced the electoral politics in post-independence period. Thus, it appears that the electoral politics as well as party politics in Assam has some unique features. Community factor has been influencing in Assam politics. There is a definite influence of ethnicity and ethnic politics of 19th decade of 20th century.

A close look at the trend in the electoral politics in Assam would reveal that there is a divide between upper Assam politics and that of the lower Assam politics. The term 'upper' and 'lower' indicates the flow of Brahmaputra. The upstream area of the valley is referred to as Upper Assam consisting of Lakhimpur on the North bank

while Dibrugah, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat on the South. Next is the Middle Assam with Nagaon at the Southern and Darrang at the Northern side of Brahmaputra.

This variation can also be explained with reference to the power game since the medieval times. The Ahom influence was mainly concentrated in the Upper reaches of the Brahmaputra Valley with their Capital at Rangpur and later at Jorhat and this area was relatively free from external invasions particularly from the Turks and Mughals. The royal gentry of the Ahoms formed the upper class of this region. On the other hand, the Lower Assam was controlled by different dynasties including the Kochs and Ahoms at different places. Moreover, a part of this area was also under the Mughals for some time.

The predominance of upper caste families in upper Assam politics could be visible through their elected representatives. They backed congress on many occasions and even today, the trend continues. While in the lower Assam, politics is free from such upper caste and upper class influence.

It is very important that the growth of population in the state is very unnatural. The population growth recorded in 2001 to 2011 is 85.90 percentages compare to the decadal growth of population in Jorhat district (the Study Area) which is 9.3 percentages only. It has been stated in the first chapter of this thesis that Jorhat is one of those districts in Assam where there has been dominance of indigenous people and almost free from cross boarder influx for which district shows a unique trend of political consciousness among the people. But this influx is very alarming in many districts of lower Assam, Barak Valley and some parts of north bank.

Many factors are responsible for this cross boarder influx the state. The main factor is economic for which a kind of forced immigration was started by British

administration during the colonial period. In the post independent both economic factors and political interest have been responsible for continuous immigration from the neighbouring countries. The factors may be critically different from time to time but it has been a reality that the continuous influxes, immigration along with forceful displacement of people (particularly in the colonial period) have changed the demographic compositions of the state. With the rapid growth of population there has been fragmentation society both culturally and politically. The political parties taking the advantage of this fragmentation started polarising the people of the state in terms of caste, community, ethnicity and religion during the elections. This has made the politics of the state more complex in recent years. Politics of religious minority has become more prominent since 1985 elections. Subsequently with the success of BJP in 1991, election consolidation of minority politics started in a strategic way.

In fact, lower Assam electoral politics has not shown any consistent trend over the years rather a mix trend is visible. This is mainly because of the historical and geographical forces and factors mentioned above. Economic backwardness of the people of the area has inevitably given the people of the area a communist bent of mind.

The present study is concerned with one of the significant themes in contemporary political studies on democracy, namely, the 'Electoral Politics in the Third World'. The study is focused on Indian situation with special reference to an area where no significant study related to electoral politics has been undertaken until now. Though the journalist has clearly observed India's North-eastern states, yet serious efforts from the policy makers and scholars are still limited in spite of there is every

possibility that politics of this states may challenge some of the major theories and thesis of Indian democratic politics.

The thesis, which is presented in six chapters, is a result of long time study of books, articles and research works available in the area substantiated by data collected from the secondary sources along with an extensive field study. In the first chapter apart from all technically required unites an attempt is made to analyse different theoretical perceptions on electoral politics and political participation throughout democracies of the world. The second chapter includes an account of gradual introduction of democratic traditions through different acts and ordinances to establish electoral process in the pre independent period in India. The transformation and growth of procedural democracy with the help of both in terms of electoral politics and political participation is discussed in this chapter. Third chapter is filled with the history of politics of Assam from the pre colonial, colonial to post independent periods. An analysis of the study area, Jorhat District of the State of Assam is presented in the fourth chapter. The district reflects the blend of both the great Indian tradition as well as of regional and local ethos. The fifth chapter embodies both findings and data analysis.

Although the time frame chosen for the present study is Post-Independence period, the 1985 election of the state of Assam has been taken as a reference point. Since then the electoral politics and political participation in the state has become more competitive, complex and significant. In this study, some historical factors and forces have also been observed to draw an outline of electoral politics of the state during the taken period.



The significance of the study of elections as a means to understand the political processes has been recognized all over the world. According to Norman Palmer (1975), the study of elections provides an opportunity to study the political system in action. If we take a longitudinal view of the political system, elections are situated at its interstices, but they bring out in sharp relief the interacting social forces that are at work in the polity, provide insights into various aspects of the system and its actual functioning. Since its independence, elections in India have evolved a long way. However, all along elections there has been significance of cultural aspects of independent India. The first general elections, which were conducted for 489 constituencies, represented 26 Indian states. At that time, there were a few two-seat and even a three-seat constituency. The multi-seat constituencies were discontinued in the 1960s. With this observation in mind and experience gathered from the field study some recommendations and suggestions are made which may help the future researchers and policy makers, political parties and academicians to undertake necessary steps to strengthen the foundation of Indian electoral democracy. Some general observations derived by studying past elections and field study conducted in the stated area are laid down in the following points.

- The area undertaken for the present study, the Jorhat district of Assam has significant historical background. The district is culturally very rich and demographically diverse. The people of this district have a conscious political mind-set which is reflected through their political action during the electoral process. Jorhat is considered as an intellectual hub of the state of Assam popularly known as knowledge city.

- Jorhat district of Assam was carved out of the Sibsagar district in 1984. The district spreads over 2851 sq. km. with a population of 1,092,256 (2011 census) and a density of 383 persons per sq. km. The sex ratio is 962. The district has SC and ST population of 8.1% and 12.08% respectively of the total population. The district has five Legislative Assembly Constituencies, viz. Jorhat, Majuli, Titabor, Mariani and Teok.
- Each of these five constituencies has its own distinctive characteristics in terms of geographical location pattern of population, cultural tradition, etc. Some major communities always play a considerable role in electoral politics in these constituencies. It is observed that political parties always fight in the election battle of these constituencies keeping these factors in mind.
- Caste and community factors have been playing a vital role in shaping the electoral politics of the district. It is often reflected through the selection of candidates by political parties during elections in some particular constituencies. The political parties always try to polarise communities by fielding candidates from a particular caste or community.
- Vote bank politics is very much present in two constituencies where the field study was conducted. In Moriani LAC there is the dominance of Tea Tribe community which was mostly inclined to Congress Party in almost all the election held so far. The Teok LAC has the dominance of both OBC and Tea Tribes. The people of these communities have always been the target for some political parties at the time of elections.
- Another factor which is very prominent in all the constituencies of the district is the role of upper caste- middle class. Role of these people is clearly visible

in Jorhat LAC of the district. The political parties very consciously observe the role of this class while selecting their candidates or raising issues before elections.

- People of the district give importance on leadership to large extend. Leaders like Hari Narayan Borua, Dulal Chandra Boruah, Lalit Chandra Rajkhowa were popularly accepted by people irrespective of their party affiliation.
- On the other hand, Bijoy Krishna Hendique, the son of great scholar Krishna Kanta Handique was never been successful as a politician at grass root levels. He failed to win sufficient support of the voters at the level of assembly segments. But he could win the parliamentary election several times from Jorhat Lok Sabha constituency with the aggregate of vote polled in favour of congress party.
- In two of the five constituencies of the district, once there had a strong support base of left politics. The constituencies were Teok and Titabor where left leaders like Dulal Chandra Khaound, Giridhar Thengal took the lead of left politics. This was period of controlled Indian economy guided by the policy of licencing to be obtained by any private entrepreneur to open up even small scald industries. The left leaders, who could win in elections, became proactive in closing down some of the private small scaled private industries, cottage industries like rice mills, tractors, irrigation plants etc which had no connection with large labour managements. These were mainly run by the people from middle class. This action of representatives from the left parties created sharp reaction among middle class businessmen and families having such establishments of these constituencies which created challenges before

the left politics. It was one of the major reasons decline of left politics in the district.

- Besides other issues the people of the district consider corruption and unemployment as major issues during the elections. The new generations of tea tribe people of the area who have been subjugated as bonded labours for long time are trying to become educated like other higher castes and classes to get good employment opportunities. Many of them have already become highly educated started plying greater roles by occupying significant positions in the society.
- The trend of self-assertion that started in the tea tribe community of the district placed a very tough challenge before the parties and politicians who had always tried to consider this community as their vote bank. There has been gradual emergence intellectual and political elite class within the community. This has contributed to the growth of political consciousness and participation among the people of the community for which the politics have become more competitive for candidates and political parties outside this community
- Two of the five assembly constituencies of Jorhat district share inter –state boarder with Nagaland. There have been long standing boarder disputes in the places like Borhola, Nagabat etc. in Titabor LAC and Nagajanka (Assam) – Mukokchung (Nagaland) area of Moriani LAC Political parties and politicians often try to take advantage of issue during the time of elections. This issue has a significant influence in electoral politics of these constituencies.

- Presence of the politics of religious minorities is almost negligible in Jorhat district compared to the many districts of Middle Assam, Lower Assam and Barak Velly. As already mentioned above caste and community factors more dominant compared to religious factors in the district of Jorhat.

On the basis of the present study some recommendations are stated below which may help election conducting machinery, policy makers, political parties and scholars to remove the lacunas in the electoral process to make it more transparent, smooth and functional to attract more and more participation of the people.

- Operational barriers to active voter participation include delays in electoral enrolment and the unawareness of the voters regarding the rules of the electoral process that lead to exploitation and usurpation of their right to vote. This problem could be addressed by issuing UID to the citizens such that the process of enrolment doesn't become unnecessarily long, repetitive and cumbersome, and that the voters' records are entered in the database and henceforth enhanced and updated over time. The process of issuing UIDs and the updating of the NRC are two critical elements of democratic politics of India, especially of Assam beset with the problem of illegal immigrants enjoying voting rights. UID could also become a source of corroborating the declared financial assets of politicians that are available in the public domain. UID would also be able to check voting in different constituencies by the same voter.

- On-going updation of NRC is also an important step towards regular upgradation of electoral rolls in an electoral process. But utmost care should be taken both in administrative and legislative levels for publication of NRC with valid citizens of the state. On the basis of the cut off year set by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The publication of NRC will be exception for the state of Assam as no such efforts is been taking up in any other state of the country.
- A system to enable voters to vote online for their constituency from a different location would go a long way in checking bogus voting in the name of the 'absentee' voter. Check should be in place so that double voting in different constituencies is negated.
- Disclosure of criminal records by politicians since 2004 elections have hardly decriminalized politics, the role of NGOs and the media in making the voters aware of the background of the candidates in the public domain and sensitizing them has to be worked on. Lack of transparency of the internal workings of the political parties and the lack of will and power to enforce law that would make the system internally transparent has enabled proliferation of under-the-carpet activities. As commonly stated, a very effective civil society empowered with effective institutions that would arouse the awareness of the common people and contribute to political literacy is required, but in this regard new areas need to be explored. The research findings on the electoral situation in India and the local references, and the empirical occurrences should be highlighted and adequately disseminated among the public. Those in

power should be pressurized to introduce reforms to the very process of coming to power and making it transparent.

- The introduction of the option of NOTA (None of the Above) has given the electorates another opportunity to exercise their voting rights showing their dislike and disagreement to all the political parties or candidates contesting election from their constituency. The use of NOTA may not be considered as non-participation in the electoral process. It shows the dissatisfaction of the voters on the performances of the parties and candidates at large through participation by casting their votes using NOTA. The election commission and election conducting machinery should take steps to make awareness among the voters for appropriate use of this option.
- The another important step that has been step taken by election commission is the introduction of VVPT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) or VPR (Verifiable Paper Record) in the Electronic Voting Machine during electoral process has help a voter to verify the vote casted by him or her. It ensures transparency in the electoral process which may increase the faith of the electorates on the system.
- Increasing voter participation is an important determinant of a successful democracy. Hence, non-partisan structures can be put into place to play this role. NGOs may be enabled with adequate resources and linkages in organizing awareness campaigns and sensitizing the voters.
- Casting a re-look into the possibility of holding elections almost at the same time, curbing of 'surrogate advertisements' after announcement of election

and restrictions on opinion polls are required to ensure lesser degree of 'influenced' voting.

- Curbing of expenses put into electoral campaign by the political parties to dismantle the growing tendency of the political power asserted by the economically well-off is a necessity. A maximum limit has to be earmarked by the ECI and this need to be tied to the transparency of the fund situation, source and expenses to be made available to the ECI and accessible to the public. The Central Government has forwarded one suggestion for this where the fund needs to be directed through a central pool.
- One of the greatest flaws in a pluralistic political community is fragmented electorate and politics with the result that common agenda for the larger society gets lost. Also, factors as caste, religion, language and ethnicity rather than credibility become the deciding factors in nominating a candidate in the earnest objective of winning the elections rather than serving the people. Awareness among the people regarding fundamental issues of human development is necessary both individual and societal levels.
- Coupled with the fact that the present system permits the candidates having the largest 'lesser than half' of the votes to come to power negates the representation of the other lesser votes and henceforth the candidates elected lack the incentive to serve the other sections of the society. The system of preferential voting with single transferable vote may be introduced in India.
- The manifesto of the political parties and individual candidates need to make a serious document which could be upgraded as the agenda for the government during its term and based on which the performances of the party in power can



be evaluated and in this regard the Election Commission of India may play a pioneering role in making it a compulsory document for independent candidates and political parties while filling nominations for an election.

- Presently the disqualification of candidates for criminal offences is provided in Sec 8 of the Representation of People Act, 1951. The disqualification does not apply to anyone who is already a sitting MP. This Act can be amended so that action could be initiated on a sitting legislator under certain laws and procedure.

The Electoral Politics of Jorhat district presents an important area of political research. The present study could cover only few areas and aspects connected to electoral politics. A much broader research on the topic is necessary covering the wide social angles.

There can be research on the influence caste and community factors in the politics of the State of Assam. The gradual decline of left parties in the state makes a good case of study. It is observed that there is particular trend of choosing candidates by political parties looking at the demographic conditions of a constituency in an election. Study of such trends paves the ways for good research. The tea tribe community of the district has been emerging as a major political force in the area. Study on their political and socio-economic orientations have not been given enough attention by the researchers of social sciences. In this way, there are many areas within the broad framework of electoral politics of the state of Assam, which can be explored by the prospective researchers. The present study could provide the baseline data for such research in the area in future.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

#### STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I/We have come from Gauhati University to study about the political participation of people in your area. The survey is solely based on academic knowledge. No person's identity would be disclosed to governmental or nongovernmental agencies. We have no relation with any party or Government organization. Your help is extremely needed for the purpose of completing this research.

আপুনি এইগাওঁৰ স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা হ'বনে?

Q. Are you a permanent resident of this village?

	Yes	No	Can't Say
	1	2	3

### Part A

#### ৰাজনৈতিক প্ৰক্ৰিয়াত অংশগ্ৰহণ

#### Participation in Political Process

আপুনি নিৰ্বাচনত ভোটদান কৰিছে নে?

Q. (1) A. Have you voted in the election?

	Yes,	No
	1	2

B. If yes, was it:

I. Panchayat election	1
ii. Assembly election	2
iii. Parliamentary election	3

আপুনি পঞ্চায়ত / বিধান সভা / লোকসভা নিৰ্বাচনত কিমানবাৰ ভোটদান কৰিছে?

Q (2). How many times have you casted your vote in Panchayat/Assembly/ Lok Sabha Election?

**Please specify: -**

Election		No. of times voted					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Panchayat	1						
Assembly	2						
Lok Sabha	3						

ভোটদানে আপোনাক লাভান্বিত কৰে বুলি ভাবে নে?

Q. (3) A. Do you think voting gives you benefits?

	Yes,	No
	1	2



b. If yes, what type of benefits?

Please specify-

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Monetary        | 1 |
| ii. Clothes        | 2 |
| iii. Job Assurance | 3 |
| iv. Any other      | 4 |

আপুনি এজন প্ৰাৰ্থীক ভোটদানৰ পূৰ্বে বন্ধু বান্ধব / ওচৰ চুবুৰীয়াৰ পৰা পৰামৰ্শ গ্ৰহণ কৰে নে?

Q. (4) Do you take suggestions from friends and neighbors before casting your vote for a particular candidate?

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| I. Sometimes I do | 1 |
| ii. Every time—   |   |
| iii. Never        | 3 |
| iv. Any other     | 4 |

তলৰ কোনটো কাৰকে নিৰ্বাচনত এজন প্ৰাৰ্থীক পছন্দ কৰাত আপোনাক প্ৰভাবান্বিত কৰে?

Q. (5) Indicate any one of the following factors which influence your choice of candidate in an election: -

- |                                            |   |
|--------------------------------------------|---|
| I. Clan and tribe of the candidate         | 1 |
| ii. Socio-economic status of the candidate | 2 |
| iii. Educational and political experience  | 3 |
| iv. Social service                         | 4 |
| V. Any other _____ (specify)               | 5 |

কেতিয়াবা আপুনি ভোটদান প্ৰক্ৰিয়াৰ পৰা বিৰত থাকিব লগা হয়, ইয়াৰ কি কাৰণ দিব বিচাৰে?

Q. (6) sometimes, you might not have casted vote in the election, what reasons would you like to give?

- |                                                                   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| I. Could not vote because I was ill                               | 1 |
| ii. Because I was too busy                                        | 2 |
| iii. My name was not in the electoral roll                        | 3 |
| iv. Elections are not important enough to make me bother to vote. | 4 |

নিৰ্বাচনসম্পৰ্কত সাধাৰণতে মানুহে তলত দিয়া ধৰণে কিছু মন্তব্য কৰে, আপুনাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কোনটো মন্তব্য সবাতোকৈ প্ৰাসংগিক?

Q. (7) Following are some statements people think generally about election, which statement best describes your view?

- |                                                             |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| I. Your individual vote makes no difference in an election. | 1 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---|

ii. It makes no difference which party forms the government.	2
iii. I feel I have a duty to vote in election	3
iv. Election helps to increase voter's knowledge of how politics works.	4
v. Election gives voters a favorable impression of how politics works.	5

নিৰ্বাচনত এটা ৰাজনৈতিক দলৰ পক্ষে তলত দিয়া কোনটো বিষয়ে আপোনাক আটাইতকৈ আকৃষ্ট কৰিছিল?

**Q. (8) What was the most important consideration in favor of the party you supported during the election?**

People of my caste/community supported that party.	1
The group or the faction in the village/mohalla supported the party.	2
My family members are traditional supporters/voters of the party.	3
I/members of my family have benefitted, or expect to benefit from the party.	4
The party has a good leadership.	5
The overall program of the party is good.	6
Other (Specify) _____	

বিগত লোকসভা আৰু বিধানসভা নিৰ্বাচনত তলত দিয়া কোনটো বিষয়ে আপোনাক প্ৰভাবান্বিত কৰিছিল?

**Q9. In the last Lok Sabha/Legislative Assembly election, what issue influenced you most?**

(a) Slogan of "Paribartan"	1
(b) Corruption-free State or nation	2
(c) For a long time one party dominated the nation or the state	3
(d) Immigration problem of the state	4

মই এতিয়া কেইটামান মন্তব্য পঢ়ি শুনাম, অনুগ্রহ কৰি প্ৰতিটো মন্তব্যৰ সম্পৰ্কে আপোনাৰ একমত বা দ্বিমত প্ৰকাশকৰক

**Q. (10) Now I will read out a few statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each one of them?**

	Agree	Disagree
A. In a democracy, the will of the majority community should prevail.	1	2
b. Reservations based on caste and religion divide the people of India.	1	2
c. We should consider ourselves Indians first and then comes our region	1	2
d. The government/state should treat minorities in the same way as it treats the majority	1	2

e. The government should make special

provision to accommodate minorities

1

2

ৰাজনৈতিক দলসমূহে ভোটৰসকলক ভোটদানৰ বাবে উৎসাহিত কৰিবলৈ বিভিন্ন প্ৰচেষ্টা হাতত লয়। আপোনাৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰ পৰা বিগত নিৰ্বাচনত তলত দিয়া কোনটো প্ৰত্যক্ষকৰিছিল?

**Q. (11) Political parties often try a lot of different ways during an election to encourage people to vote. In your experience, in the last election, which of the following did you observe?**

Yes

No

Don't rem.

A. Candidate/Party worker/canvasser came to your

house to ask your vote

2

1

8

B. Party/Candidate contacted you or a family member

through a phone call or recorded voice or SMS.

2

1

8

C. Party/Candidate offering food/honorarium etc. to

voters in your locality

2

1

8

D. Party/Candidate offering to drive voters in your

locality to the polling stations

2

1

8

কিছুসংখ্যক মানুহে বিশ্বাস কৰে যে ৰাজনীতি টকা পইচাৰ দ্বাৰা নিয়ন্ত্ৰিত, কিছূবে কয় দুখীয়া মানুহ সকলো এইক্ষেত্ৰত গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ, আপোনাৰ মতামত কি?

**Q. (12) people believe that politics is controlled by money, some say that poor people are also important, what is your opinion?**

(a) Controlled by money

1

(b) Poor people are important

2

(d) Don't Know

3

ভোটদান কৰিবলৈ যাওতে তলত দিয়া কোনটো বিষয়ে আপোনাক আটাইতকৈ বেছি প্ৰভাবান্বিত কৰে?

**Q. (13) While voting, which of the following influences you most?**

(I) Political party

1

(ii) Qualities of a candidate

2

(iii) Religion of the candidate

1

নিৰ্বাচনৰযোগেদি চৰকাৰ গঠন হোৱাতো উচিতনে?

**Q. (14) Should government be formed through the elections?**

(a) If no, what is the reason?

2

(b) If yes, which method should be adopted?

3

আপুনি ভোটদান কৰা প্ৰাৰ্থীজনৰ জাতি সম্পৰ্কত আপুনি জানিছিল নে?

Q. (15) Did you know the caste of the candidate you voted for?

Yes, No

1 2

নিৰ্বাচনত ভোটদান কৰাটো আবশ্যক বুলি ভাবে নে?

Q. (16) Do you think it necessary to vote for the elections?

Yes, No

1 2

আপোনাৰ নেতাজন যি দলৰ লগত জড়িত আপুনি সেই দলৰ পক্ষে সদায় ভোটদান কৰে নেকি?

Q. (17) Do you always vote in favor of any party to which your leader belongs?

Yes, No

1 2

যদি আপোনাৰ নেতাজনে এটা ৰাজনৈতিক দল সলনি কৰি আন এটা দলত যোগদান কৰে, আপুনি সেয়াই কৰিব নেকি?

Q. (18) If your leader changes the political party and joins the other one; will you also do the same?

Yes, No

1 2

আপোনাৰ মতে ইয়াৰ কোনটো কাৰকে যোৰহাট জিলাৰ নিৰ্বাচনসমূহ প্ৰভাবান্বিত কৰে?

Q. (19) Now I will read out some statement Which, according to you, is the major factor that influenced the elections in the Jorhat district?

1	Community factor	
3	Money factor	
4	Unemployment issue	
5	underdevelopment	
6	Community factor & money factor	
7	Unemployment & corruption	
8	Underdevelopment & community	
9	Issue of illegal migration, insurgency, etc.	
10	Flood and natural calamity	

**Part B**

**Party membership and political activity**

নিৰ্বাচনৰ সময়ত জনসাধাৰণে বিভিন্ন কাৰ্যত জড়িত হয়। বিগত নিৰ্বাচন সমূহত তলত দিয়া কোনটো কাৰ্যত আপুনি অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰিছিল?

**Q. (20) During the elections people participate in various activities. Out of the activities stated below, in which did you participate in the recent election?**

Activities	Yes	No
a. Attended election meetings/rallies?	2	1
b. Participated in processions/street plays, etc.?	2	1
c. Participated in door to door canvassing?	2	1
d. Contributed or collected money?	2	1
e. Distributed election leaflets or put up posters?	2	1

যেতিয়া চৰকাৰে কিবা বিষয়ত সিদ্ধান্ত গ্ৰহণ কৰে তেতিয়া আপুনি আপোনাৰ মতামত প্ৰকাশ কৰে নে?

**Q. (21) Do you express your views whenever Government takes any decision on any issue?**

(A) Newspaper/TV radio	1
(B) In public meeting	2
(c) Not interested to discuss	3
(d) Social media (new media)	4

আপুনি কোনো ৰাজনৈতিক দলৰ সদস্য নেকি? যদি হয় কোনটো দলৰ?

**Q. (22) Are you a member of any political party? If yes, please specify.**

I) Congress	1
ii) BJP	2
iii) AGP	3
IV) Others	4
V) Not a member	5

আপোনাৰ পৰিয়ালৰ কোনো সদস্য ৰাজনৈতিক দলৰ লগতসম জড়িত হয় নে / আছিল নে?

**Q. (23) Is anyone of your family members actively associated with any political party? Yes/No**

**If Yes, in what way? As a:**

(a) Member	1
(b) Supporter/Sympathizer	2
(c) An Office bearer	3
(d) In any other rank	4

আপোনাৰ পিতৃ মাতৃয়ে সমৰ্থন নকৰা কোনো ৰাজনৈতিক দলক আপুনি সমৰ্থন কৰে নেকি?

Q. (24) Do you belong to or support any political party which your parents do not prefer?

(a) If yes, what is the reason? 1

(b) If no, does it mean that your political decisions are determined by your parents? 2

**(Background Information of the Respondent)**



Use circle against each code

Name of the interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the village: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S/HUSBAND'S NAME:

Date of Survey:

Name of the Assembly Constituency:

SEX	Male	1
	Female	2
	Others	3
AGE	18+	1
	30+	2
	45 above	3
RELIGION	Hindu	1
	Muslim	2
	Others	3
LANGUAGE	Assamese	1
	Bengali	2
	Others	3

CASTE	General	1
	ST	2
	SC	3
	OBC/ MOBC	4
	TGL*	5
Educational Qualification	Primary	1
	Matric/H. S	2
	Degree above	3
	Illiterate	4
Occupation / Profession	Labor/peasant	1
	Government	2
	Business	3
	Unemployed	4
	Student	5
Marital Status	Married	1
	Unmarried	2
	Widow	3
Yearly Income_____	(APL/BPL)	1
	No BPL/APL	2
Members of Family		
Place of Birth_____		
If migrant, generation of migration to the state_____		
*Tea Tribal Group		



## **Annexure - II**

### **(Snapshots of Field Study)**

