



ROLE OF REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE FORMATION OF STATE GOVERNMENTS IN ASSAM

Mamun Imdadul Haque Chawdhury

Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi University, Meghalaya

Advocate, Gauhati High Court

Former MLA, Naoboicha, Lakhimpur

The first general election to the Assam Legislative Assembly was held in 1937. No Party was able to form government on its own strength Indian National Congress got the maximum number of seats in the Assembly but unable to cross the majority mark of 108 seats in the legislative Assembly, Sayeed Sabdullah led Assam Valley Muslim Party - a regional political party got just 5 seats in the Assembly Sabdullah united the smaller parties basically which were dominated by the Muslims and merged his own party to the Muslim League and formed the government as the first elected Premier of Assam. He won the election from a regional political party but headed the government of a national political party. As he headed the government of a national party despite being elected from a regional political party, so, his government can't be term as a government of a regional political party.

The Tribal League is the first regional political party of Assam who participated in the government formation and shared the power. After the resignation of the Sahdullah ministry on 19 September, 1938 the Tribal League signed a pact with the APCC at Shillong to share the power with the Congress. This pact has been known as "Shillong Pact" in Assam's political history. Following are the main features of the said Shillong Pact-

1. Tribal League will remain as a separate political party and they are not bound to support all the decisions of the Congress party.
2. Until and unless the joint electoral was formed as per the population pattern by the Congress led ministry, the current separate electoral system will be remained as same.
3. Representatives of the tribal people to the election of the Local Board would be nominated as per the decision of the Tribal League's next session.
4. The tribal people who are converted to the Hinduism and Christianity would be included in to the Schedule Tribe category if they want to do so.



5. Tribal people should be treated as a separate class in the employ the government services until and unless to the fulfilment of the quota reserved for them.
6. Umost mesures should be taken to educating the tribal people and for that maxim budgetary allotment should be done.
7. Maximum measures should be taken for the scholarship and stipend in the wid students for both the general education and employment generated education sectors
8. Scholarship to the students of M. and high school should be given with maximum relaxation system.
9. One member of the Tribal League should be inducted into the ministry
10. Government must take measures to give land allotment to the landless tribal people specially people of the Miri community.

As per the pact Tribal League supported the Gopinath Bordoloi Government who won in as the Premier of Assam on 20 September,1938 and Tribal League MLA Rupnath Brahma was inducted in the Bordolosi Cabinet as Cabinet Minister for the Department of forest. After resignation of Gopinath Bordoloi Government on 17 November, 1939 the Tribal League supported the Sabdullah Government and Rupnath Brahma retained his ministry with the same department.

After independence first election to the Assam Legislative Assembly was held in 1952. Since then up to 1978 no regional party neither able to form government nor able to share any sorts of power in the Assam Cabinet. After a long gape of nearly 26 years from the first general election, the opportunity of a regional political party to share the power has come in 1978. In 1978 the Janata Party secured 53 seats in the Assembly which is short of 11 numbers of MI.As to form the government and in that election Plains Tribal Council of Assam-another Tribal Party got 4 seats. The PTCA supported the Golap Borborah let Janata Cabinet and PTCA leader Samar Brahma Choudhury was inducted as a cabinet minister of Forests and Animal Husbandry. This was the first incident or record of a regional political party who shared the power in Assam after independence.

In 1979 Assam Assembly Speaker Jugen Hazarika formed a regional political party within the Assembly in the name of Assam Janata Dal Legislative Party which later transformed it's into Assam Janata Dal. Actually, it was a break way affection of Janata Party and formed within the Assembly with the MLAs only just to form the government. So, their activities were punely limited within the Assembly only having zero organizational strength. On 9 March, 1979 Jugen Hazarika formed the government as the leader of Assam Janata Dal with the support of Congress (U), Congress (1) RCPL, PTCA and Janata Party (seculars But it lasted only for three months.



Despite its very short tenure it can be treated a government by a regional political party which was not form to form the government before the election.

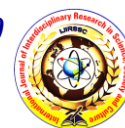
After signing of the Assam Accord on 15 August, 1985 a new regional political party in the name of AGP was formed on 14 October, 1985. Not like AJD, the AGP was formed to fight the election and to form the government. in the 1985 Assam Legislative Assembly Election AGP got 60 seats on its own which is short of 4 number of seats to form the government 7 independent MI A joined the AGP for which the strength of AGP in the Assembly rose to 67. Founder president of AGP Prafulla Kumar Mahanta was sworn in as the first chief minister of Assam from a regional political party. In 1996 AGP again formed the government but this time not on its own but with the help of CPI, CPI(M). ASDC and UPPA Before the 1996 Assembly Election AGP formed a five-party alliance with the above parties and contested the election as a major alliance partner of that alliance. In that election AGP won 59 seats in the Assembly which means 4 short of half way mark of 126 seated Assembly. The AGP formed the government with Prafulla Kumar Mahanta as the chief minister again with the support of 3 MI As from CPI. 2 MLAs from CPI(M), 5 MLAs from ASDC and MLA from UPPA. As per the alliance another regional party ASDC got a cabinet berth with Holiram Terang as cabinet minister, another regional party UPPA also got a cabinet berth with Abdul Muhib Mazumdar as a cabinet minister in the Mahanta cabinet. For the first time a left party- the CPI took part in the ministry as Promud Gogoi as cabinet minister in the Mahanta Cabinet

In 2006 another regional political party- the BPF shared the power with the second Tarun Gogoi ministry. In that election Congress got 53 seats which is 11 short of majority mark and the BPF got 11 seats in that Assembly election and it supported the Congress government. In a power deal BPF got 3 cabinet ministers in the second Tarun Gogoi cabinet.

In 2011 BPF again shared the power with 3 cabinet ministers in the third Tarun Gogoi ministry. In the Assembly election of 2011 Congress got 78 seats which is much higher than majority mark of 64. Yet Congress inducted all 3 cabinet ministers of BPF as per pre-poll alliance deal.

In 2016 BPF came out from Congress led alliance and contested the election as an alliance partner of BJP and Sarbananda Sonowal Jed ministry gave 3 ministers to the BPE In the Sonowal cabinet AGP took part as junior partner like BPP with 3 cabinet ministers

In 2021 AGP contested as an alliance partner of IP like as in 2016 but BPF parted ways from BJP led "Mirrat" and contested the election as an alliance partner of Congress led "Mala In that year BJP removed Sarbananda Sonowal from the post of Chief Minister despite being landslide victory of the "Mitrar" and Dr. Himanta Bishwa Sharma assumed the charge as the new Chief Minister of "Mitrail and AGP shared the power with 2 cabinet berths having only 9 MI As in the BJP led Dr. Himanta Bishwa Sharma Ministry The BPF who left the "Afr to join the "Mahaju" just before the Assembly election got only 4 seats in the Assembly again returned back



to the "Miraut" fold after election. BPF lost its Gosaigaon seat in a by election which was held after the untimely demise of its NILA Marendra Nerzety. UPPL-another regional political party contested the election for the first time after its inception as an alliance partner of "Mirrar and got 7 seats in the Assembly, UPPL founder president UG Brahma was accommodated as cabinet minister in Dr. Himanta Bishwa Sharma ministry.

So, from 1937 to 2021 there is a peculiar type of history of power sharing or government formation by regional political parties in Assam. The AGP which once had a strong command among the people of Assam who formed the government twice now working as a mere junior partner of a government led by a national political party - BJP. The Tribal league has the first record of power sharing by a regional political party in Assam is just history now with no presence or relevance. The PTCA which once played an important role to form the first non-Congress government in Assam has no any political presence now. The ASDC once which had strong presence both in Diphu and Dispur politics has no any political relevance now. The BPF who shared the power for three times twice with congress and once with BJP has just 3 MLAs now and gradually decreasing its political strength. The UPPA which once played key role in the formation of second AGP government is no more a party.

Role of regional political parties in the formation of state government in Assam-

Year	Name of the Regional Party	Party who headed the Govt.	No. of MLAs of Regional Parties	Cabinet births allotted to the Regional Parties
1938	Tribal League	Congress	4	1
1939	Tribal League	Muslim League	4	1
1978	PTCA	JP	4	1
1979	Assam Janata Dal	Assam Janata Dal		
1985	AGP	AGP	60*	18
1996	AGP	AGP	59	
	ASDC		5	1
	UPPL		1	1
2006	BPF	INC	10	3
2011	BPF	INC	11	3
2016	BPF	BJP	12	3
	AGP		14	3
2021	AGP	BJP	9	2
	UPPL		7	1

**This figure was just after election results, but later few independent MLAs joined AGP and the figure was increased*



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