

# TEZPUR UNIVERSITY



## Mass Communication & Journalism Department

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1).

*How far is Northeast in the race of Autonomous Colleges?*

As per our knowledge, In the world after United States and China, the third largest is India's Education System and at this tertiary level, The University Grants Commission is the governing body. It administers education standards, advises the government, helps coordinate between the centre and the state as well as provides recognition and disbursement of funds to the approved colleges and universities. The higher education in India includes both Public colleges or universities supervised by Government of India and Private universities supported by various bodies and societies. However both public and private universities in India are recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

In Indian Education system, there are two types of colleges and universities i. e; Affiliated and Autonomous. The former mentioned needs to be affiliated to some or the other University and have to follow the rules, regulations, syllabus and exam set and conducted by the university. In contrast, The status of Autonomous colleges generally refer to as academic independent college granted by the UGC. These autonomous colleges are affiliated to Government Universities but have academic independence to form their own educational structure including the everyday curriculum, syllabus, exams, etc that meets the future standards of that particular field.

To look back at the past, the number of colleges was small for which the affiliated system could effectively govern the working of the college, act as an examining body and award degrees on their behalf. However with the increase in the number of Universities all over the country, it is becoming difficult to attend the varied needs of individual colleges by the university which in turn is affecting the academic development of individual colleges. Therefore Colleges having prospective for offering higher standard programmes do not have the freedom to do so. The Education Commission of 1964-66 pointed towards the exercise of academic freedom by teachers as a pivotal need for the development of intellectual climate of the nation to enhance the higher education system. Thus, the Education Commission (1964-66) suggested college autonomy to promote academic excellence.

The objectives for Autonomous colleges were formulated by The National Policy on Education (1986-92) which highlights the freedom that the autonomous colleges shall have such as to

determine and prescribe its own syllabus and course of study that suits local needs, to prescribe rules for admission in accord with the reservation policy of the state government, usage of modern tools for imparting knowledge and evoke greater creativity, to put different methods of assessment of students regarding their performance, examination and results, and to promote healthy practices among students like community services, projects to benefit society and environment, etc. Hence these were few purposes laid out for the autonomous colleges to perform upon. Partial Autonomy is not given to any institution and autonomy granted to the institution is Institutional and covers all the courses at UG, PG, Diploma, M. Phil level.

The importance of autonomous college is huge as an autonomous college carries a prestigious image for the students and the teachers. As per the rules and standards of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), any college which has a score of 3.51 or above on a measurement scale of 0 – 4 is considered as the Autonomous college. The colleges which have a score of 750 or above duly certified by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) is eligible for the autonomous status. For their diverse range of powers over the academic structure such as self governance capability, academic excellence and improved in the quality of education, autonomous colleges are highly on demand among the students. The facilities that come with the autonomy status are highly beneficial and crucial for advancement of the entire teaching-learning process. Along with this, such colleges are also considered as a honour for the region and state in which they exists.

In India, we have 25 states with 117 Universities having 827 autonomous colleges approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Among them the highest number of 227 autonomous colleges belong to the state of Tamil Nadu followed by Andhra Pradesh making it the second highest state having 114 autonomous colleges and the third state having 117 as the highest number of autonomous colleges belongs to Maharashtra. As per the list by University Grants Commission of approved autonomous colleges date on 31st March 2021, Other states includes Assam 03, Bihar 02, Chhattisgarh 13, Goa 01, Gujarat 05, Haryana 01, Himachal Pradesh 05, Jammu and Kashmir 04, Jharkhand 05, Karnataka 79, Kerala 22, Madhya Pradesh 44, Manipur 02, Nagaland 03, Odisha 48, Pondicherry 04, Punjab 12, Rajasthan 07, Telangana 74, Uttar Pradesh 12, Uttarakhand 04 and West Bengal 18.

Analyzing the list of Autonomous colleges given by UGC, we can see that the Southern states

of India has more autonomous colleges such as Tamil Nadu with 227, Andhra Pradesh with 114, Karnataka with 79, Kerala with 22, Pondicherry with 04 and Telangana with 74 autonomous colleges than any other part of the country. Shifting our focus to Northeast India, the number is the least we can expect for the region. Presently, Assam has only three autonomous colleges recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) namely North Lakhimpur College in Lakhimpur and Jagannath Barooah College in Jorhat. Both these Colleges come under the jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University and Nowgong College in Nagaon affiliated to Gauhati University. Assam University, Silchar and Tezpur University, Tezpur do not have any college under this scheme as per the list published by the UGC on March 31, 2021. The State of Manipur has only two autonomous colleges i. e, Don Bosco College in Manipur and Oriental College in Imphal (West Manipur) are both affiliated to Manipur University, Imphal. Another state of Northeast is Nagaland having Three approved autonomous Colleges namely Kohiman Science College in Nagaland, Patkai Christian College in Dimapur Nagaland and St. Joseph's College in Kohima Nagaland. All these three Colleges comes under the authority of Nagaland University. However the Other States of Northeast such as Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Mizoram donot have a single Autonomous college.

Quality Higher Education is the major tool for socio- economic development particularly in the case of developing nations. In a country with enormous diversity, the North Eastern region comprising of seven states is an important geographical entity. Even so the development of this region is impeded by certain inherent difficulties such as inadequate infrastructure, adverse climatic conditions, mountainous landscape, political happenings, border clashes and ethnic tensions. But since the setting up of the Cotton College in 1901 and Gauhati University about half century later in Guwahati many significant changes have taken place in the field of education in this region. After Independence there is a mushroom growth in the number of colleges in Assam. Even in other states of the region, academic opportunities at the University -level have increased and are still unfolding and reaching new dimensions.

The question here arises that despite of the improvement in the academic area of the state why is Northeast India still behind in the race of achieving the autonomous status for the colleges and if so what should the region do to improve it's position.

After an ultimate analysis, The region is still lacking behind with a huge gap compared to the rest of the country when it comes to the autonomous status of the colleges due to several

reasons like infrastructure, Lack of Interest to carry out responsibilities on the part of the organizations assigned as well as lower grades given by NAAC. According to UGC, to gain the status of autonomy the college should go through a meticulous selection cum scrutiny process as this award comes with various considerable degrees and, qualify in various parameters with high academic standards as the basic criteria set by the authority to become an autonomous college. The institutions that have clear visions would prosper on the race of survival. In Assam and Northeast as a whole, there are few associations and organizations who are related to this issue and it is their responsibility to take the required steps to encourage more colleges to apply for this status. As Grade from NAAC is an important part to qualify in the list of autonomous colleges, the colleges therefore should strive hard to achieve a better and respectable grade from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) for financial and other recognition. Possessing a status of autonomy is like a feather in one's cap which is usually looked by students and faculty members before enrolling in a college in any discipline including both general and technical.

Thus, Autonomous colleges are breaking the traditional rigid degree requirements by permitting students to take courses outside the normally prescribed curriculum such as Maharashtra is trying to allow students from one autonomous college to take courses in another autonomous college with full credit thus providing varied opportunity for students to blossom. The media of the states should also highlight the importance of such a positive development that has capability to inspire others concerned. The reform also opens the door to autonomy to somewhat lesser performing colleges. Therefore, all the states of the country specially the one's having less number of autonomous colleges shall try their best to increase their number and improve their quality of higher education.

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### *Elections 2021 : The war for the throne of supremacy*

The Preamble of the Constitution declares India to be Democratic and Republic. One of the most important feature of the Democratic polity is elections at regular intervals. An election is a formal process of voting to choose a person to be the political leader or representative in government. Election is the medium through which the attitudes, values and beliefs of the people towards their political environment are reflected.

India's first general election was held in 1952 which led to the victory of our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Party of India. In a democracy, Citizens Right To Vote is a crucial way by which people can influence the decision about how their country should be governed. Politicians who contest the election have to persuade people to support them in order to win an election. Each Political Party has to promise a list of policies or plan of action that they would carry out if they get elected. Citizens can make their choice by marking on a ballot paper and putting it into a ballot box which is not opened until the polls are closed or Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are used to record votes by simply allowing voters to cast their votes by pressing the blue button on the balloting unit against the candidate and symbol of the voter's choice.

In order to facilitate free and fair elections the Constitution establishes The Election Commission of India or ECI which is a constitutional body entrusted with the responsibility of administering the elections in India. The ECI was established in 1950 and works as an individualistic body free from any external compulsion from the party in power or executive of the day and the basic objective of the ECI is to define and control the course of elections held at various levels.

Elections in India are hailed as the festival of democracy and is held after every 5 years. The most recent election that took place in India is the 2021 election which includes bye-elections to the Lok Sabha, elections to the Rajya Sabha and elections to legislative assemblies of 4 states and 1 union territory namely Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry.

The Assam Legislative Assembly election 2021 was the 15th quinquennial legislative assembly election held in the Indian state of Assam from 27th March 2021 to 6th April 2021 in three phases to elect 126 MLAs. According to the schedule set by ECI the voting in Assam is

supposed to be counted on 2nd May, 2021 whereas the date of completion is Tuesday, 4 May 2021.

The Chief Election Commissioner announced the following schedule for Election in Assam. The first phase consisted of 47 constituencies for which the date of issue of notification was 2nd March 2021 and the Date for filling nomination ended on 9th March 2021 while the date for scrutiny of nomination was 10th March, 2021. The last date for withdrawal of nomination for this phase was 12th March 2021 and the final poll date was on 27th March 2021. The Second phase consisted of 39 Constituencies for which the specific dates were - Issue of notification date was 5th March 2021, finish date for nomination filling was 12th March 2021, Scrutiny of nomination was 15th March 2021, Last Date for Withdrawal of nomination was 17th March 2021 and the poll date was scheduled on 1st April 2021. Similarly, the Third phase included 40 constituencies and the dates defined were - Nomination Issue date was on 12th March 2021, Last Date for filling nomination was 19th March 2021, Scrutiny of nomination was 20th March 2021, Last Date for Withdrawal of nomination was 22nd March 2021 and the final poll date was on 6th April. Thus, based on this schedule the election in Assam was executed.

At present, Assam is ruled by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which is supported by the regional parties Asom Gana Parishad (ASP) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF). The parties that participate in Assam's 2021 election apart NDA were- the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) 'Mahajath' supported by All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), Bodoland People's Front (BPF), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation (CPI)(ML)L, Anchalik Gana Morcha (AGM) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD); and the combined Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and Rajbor Dal (RD) that may forge the likelihood of United Regional Front (URF).

The poll battle in the state is primarily alliance vs. alliance and is going to be interesting as NDA is hoping for 100 plus seats whereas mahajath eyes for 70 seats out of 126 assembly seats. An apparent conclusion is that any one of them must fail in achieving the target that they had set. Apparently talking about the no. Of voters, In Phase 1 Total percentage Of voters turnout was 79.93%, in the Second Phase it was 80.96% and an estimated 85.04%. of 79.2 lakh electors voted in the third and last phase of Assam Assembly election.

To achieve their Victory each party has pledged and released manifestoes. BJP released

manifesto for the Assam Assembly Election 2021 listing out '10 Commitments' some of which are : First, BJP pledged to release a 'corrected' version of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) identifying illegal migrants and residents who could not substantiate citizenship claims but avoided any reference to the implementation of CAA which violates the spirit of the 1985 Assam Accord that prescribed the midnight of March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal immigrants. The BJP also didnot make any remark about the Clause 6 of the Assam Accord which guarantees Constitutional safeguards for the indigenous communities. Second, It ensured to make Assam Flood-Free through dredging of rivers and building large reservoirs for excess rainwater, strengthening 'hamghars' and creating a taskforce to recover lands of satras and places of worship of tribal people from illegal encroachment further ensuring job opportunities, food and water sufficiency and entrepreneurial chances. The BJP also assured to distribute land deeds to all landless Indian Citizens of the State in a phased manner and also said that it will bring in appropriate laws to tackle and end 'land jihad' as well as 'love jihad'. Also the party promised to add technology to border vigilance and ensured a special socio-economic and caste census for the identification of indigenous Muslim communities in order to extend the benefits of various State and Central development schemes focusing on minority welfare. To ensure protecting the rights of local people the party guaranteed granting Scheduled Tribes to six communities which comprises of the Tai-Ahom, Koch-Rajbongshi, Moran, Matak, Chutia and "Tea Tribes (Adivasi)".

Along with this, the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too released it's manifesto for Assam making "five guarantees" such as Rs. 2000 per month for every housewife and law to nullify the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). In the manifesto the Congress also promised five lakh government jobs and 200 units of free electricity per month for all besides hiking the minimum wages if tea gardrn workers to Rs. 365. Congress also guarantees to defend the idea of Assam that contains culture, language, tradition, history and the way of thinking. AJP (Assam Jatiya Parishad) also released poll manifesto highlighting a number of assurances claiming that the AJP will fight against all moves to encourage illegal infiltration which meant to alter the population pattern in the state. It also has promised to provide land rights to citizens, establishing a three-tier market for local, national and international produces and also formulate short term as well as long term measures to tap the Brahmaputra River. The party also assured to implement the recommendations of the High Level Committee on the Assam Accord in a time-bound manner. To recapitulate its opposition to the CAA, the party also ensured to put



pressure on the Central Government to seal the border with Bangladesh.

Thus with this we can see how various parties contesting for ultimate one throne took to the political battle field with their own unique manifestoes, strategies, conspiracies, propoganda's and campaigning tricks for instance, Grand open road shows by BJP supported and followed by thousands of people including massive number of workers, sections of senior citizens, housewives and youngsters as well as many such rallies by different parties were witnessed. With the advent of digital media everything has become easy and we can definitely observe the wise use of it by our political parties and leaders using their social handles smartly to showcase every minute details of their works on their accounts to reach out to the mass audience. Earlier Politics was the topic of discussion of the old people but now even the youths have become a important section to voice their opinion and perform their democratic duties and one of the most recent noticeable and significant strategy to look on is how the political parties have tried to capture the attention of the youths through various schemes in order to gain their support and also to create awareness among people about their rights and duties through various sport icons, film actors etc. Over the time the concept of election for the citizen have changed from being treated as a holiday to understanding the importance of voting and choosing their leaders.

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