

Regionalism losing ground in Assam



Comments 1



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With the lapse of time and rapid changes in political scenario the illusion of regionalism is waning in Assam and the north eastern parts of the country. During last several years Indian politics reached a chaotic situation throughout the country leading an air of hatred against the national political parties. There was a deep feeling in the people that the national political parties failed to deliver goods and look into the interests of the region. In a vast country like India every region has got different types of problems. Simultaneously, all regions of the country face different types of situations. To safeguard the interest of the region, the necessity of regional political parties was felt for the betterment and welfare the people of the region.

In Assam, even though some regional parties existed earlier, their role was negligible. With the launching of movement against the foreign nationals in the state by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and Asom Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP), the people were inspired to struggle and fight against maladministration, corruption and other evils of the society. The controversy over the voters' list in the state, which arose in the year 1979, is still alive. Due to inclusion of foreigners' name in the lists, for the first time elections had to be stalled. The reports from various parts of the state came that the lists contained the names of foreigners. The delay in the process of identification and deportation of such people led to more complexity of the issue.

After continuous President's rule for a long time a 'drama of election' was played by the ruling party at the Centre in 1983. Despite opposition and agitations by majority of organizations, the Congress government at the Centre was firm in its decision to hold the elections and it won the 'so-called' elections too, which was rejected by the people. However, with the signing of the Assam Accord on August 15, 1985, between the state government and the movement leaders, in presence of erstwhile prime minister, in New Delhi, peace returned to the state and the political scenario changed.

Ironically, the fresh elections in 1985, were held on the basis of the same electoral rolls, against which the movement was launched. The results of the polls were surprising. The newly formed Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), the staunch advocate of regionalism came to power defeating the mighty Congress. Politically immaturated the AGP leaders took the reins of the state administration in December 1985. The people of the state kept high hopes on the team in handling the affairs of the state, as its active members were fully aware of the problems of the state and almost all of them were enthusiastic. The new leaders were firm in their opinion that the national parties were 'useless', so far the state's matters were concerned. On public platform they declared that Delhi could not solve the problems of Assam, as it did not try to understand them. The AGP ruled the state once for a full term of five years, but failed to provide any package of relief for the people of the state. The vexed foreign national issue remained unresolved. New problems raised ugly heads. The tribal communities of the state began disassociating and struggling to save their identity and culture. The law and order situation deteriorated. The administration could not detect and deport any foreigner from the state.

The next election in 1991, was crucial for the regional party and the Congress came to power again. It was a lesson for the AGP, which failed to deliver goods. The Congress also failed to prove its worth during its term. The people were in dilemma having no alternative to decide between these two national and regional parties. In the next elections, electorate gave another chance to AGP to rule over the state, but the party proved complete failure in administration. The state was ruled by the corruption, abduction, killings etc. The differences in the ruling party came to the surface, which was completely against the wishes of the people. The people have no choice. Illusion of regionalism has taken back seat and the Congress, the national party has made its root strong, despite all odds.

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