

Rise Of The AIUDF: Analysing Its Emergence And Political Impact In Assam

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Abstract

This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the emergence and role of the All-India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in the politics of Assam. The paper explores the historical background of the party, its ideology, electoral performance, and the impact it has on the socio-political landscape of the state. By examining various factors, including regional identity politics, minority representation, and electoral alliances, this paper seeks to shed light on the AIUDF's significance in shaping the political dynamics of Assam.

Keywords: AIUDF, Electoral Performance, Regional Politics, Assam Legislative Assembly Elections.

Introduction: Assam is a north-eastern state of India located in the eastern Himalayas. It is known for its rich history, diverse culture, and natural beauty. The history of Assam dates back to ancient times, with early human settlements in the region dating back to the Stone Age. Assam was ruled by various dynasties and kingdoms throughout history, including the Kamarupa kingdom, which flourished from the 4th to the 12th centuries. The Ahom kingdom, established in the 13th century, played a significant role in shaping Assam's history, culture and politics. The Ahom dynasty ruled the region for nearly six centuries until the arrival of the British. Assam came under British rule in the early 19th century. It was initially part of the Bengal Presidency and later became a separate province. The British introduced tea plantations and started wasteland settlements in Assam. As a result, a huge number of people, encouraged by the British, flocked to settle permanently in the state of Assam from Benaras, Ghaziapur, Chota Nagpur, and

Bihar to work in the tea plantation and peasant families from East Bengal to produce food crops. This had a transformative impact on the state's economy and demography (Guha, 2014).

Assam has a diverse socio-demographic fabric characterized by various ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities. The major demographic groups include the Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Karbi, and various indigenous tribes. Assamese is the official language of Assam and is widely spoken by the majority of the population. Bengali, Bodo, Karbi, and various tribal languages are also spoken in different regions. Assam has a mix of religious affiliations. Hinduism is the majority religion, followed by Islam. A considerable chunk of the population in this region practises Christianity, Buddhism, and various indigenous tribal religions.

From the annexation of Assam in the British colonial territory to the independence of India, the political landscape was dominated by British officials and the English-educated elites who worked under different offices under the Britishers. Hence, there were limited avenues for political participation by the locals. During the colonial period, Indian National Congress and Muslim League were the major political parties functioning in the state with certain restrictions. However, after the independence at the cost of partition of the Indian Territory in 1947, Assam became a part of the Indian Union. In the post-independence period, the state of Assam went through significant political changes. A political vacuum was created after the disappearance of the Muslim League from the political foray in the state. In the early years after independence, the state was governed mainly by the Indian National Congress (INC), which was the dominant political party at the national level. The INC held sway over the political landscape of Assam for several decades.

The first non-Congress government in Assam was formed by the Janata Party under the Chief Ministership of Golap Borbora in 1978. It was the first assembly election in the state after the abrupt revocation of National Emergency in 1977 and the consequent dissolution of the House of the People or the Lok Sabha. The support base of the Congress waned considerably in the post-emergency period and Indira Gandhi suffered a huge popular backlash in the national election of 1977 which ousted her from power after 11 years. Under these tumultuous circumstances, Assam witnessed a significant language movement. The Assam Agitation, which lasted from 1979 to

1985, was a movement against the perceived threat to the state's identity and culture due to the influx of migrants, particularly from Bangladesh. The agitation demanded the detection and deportation of illegal immigrants and led to the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985. The Assam Accord created a political space for regional parties, which championed the cause of the Assamese people and focused on regional issues. One of the prominent regional parties that emerged during this period was the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), founded in 1985. The AGP gained significant support and came to power in the state in the same year. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, the political landscape in Assam was dominated by the INC and the AGP. These two parties took turns in forming the government in the state. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a national party, also started gaining traction in Assam from the 1990s onwards. The party made inroads by aligning with regional parties and capitalizing on issues related to illegal immigration and regional identity. In the 2000s, the political landscape of Assam witnessed further changes with the emergence of new regional parties and coalitions. The Congress and BJP, along with various regional parties, have competed for power in the state. At this juncture, the major political parties in Assam include the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), Bodoland People's Front (BPF), and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL). The state's political landscape remained competitive, with the BJP forming the government in Assam after the 2016 and 2021 state assembly elections. With a resounding victory, the BJP, along with its alliance partner Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), secured a comfortable majority in the legislative assembly led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in recent 2021 Assembly elections. The Congress and other regional parties have remained key players in the state's politics as well. In this paper, an attempt has been made to discuss the background and electoral performance of the AIUDF which is a significant political outfit in Assam. This research paper aims to explore the emergence and role of AIUDF in Assam's politics, examining the party's electoral performance, its impact on the political dynamics of the state, and the implications for regional and national politics. By analyzing the party's ideology, strategies, and electoral alliances, we seek to gain insights into the factors that have contributed to its growth and assess its significance in the broader context of Indian politics.

Objectives: This paper primarily seeks to examine the background for the emergence of AIUDF in Assam, and to analyse the electoral performance of AIUDF in the state legislature.

Methodology: The study mainly depends upon secondary sources, including electoral data, party manifestos, speeches, media reports, scholarly articles, books and Government reports. By critically evaluating these sources, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the AIUDF's emergence, its political strategies, and its implications for democratic processes, minority representation, and identity politics in Assam. Through this research, we hope to contribute to the existing scholarship on political parties in Assam, as well as deepen our understanding of the dynamics of regional and identity-based politics within the complex socio-cultural fabric of Assam.

The emergence of AIUDF:

The political landscape of Assam has witnessed significant transformations in recent decades. The emergence of regional and identity-based parties has played a crucial role in reshaping the political dynamics of the region. One such party that has garnered attention and influence in Assam's political arena is the AIUDF, founded in 2005 by Badruddin Ajmal, a prominent Muslim leader and businessman. The AIUDF has risen to prominence as a significant political force representing the interests of the state's Muslim minority population. The AIUDF's emergence in Assam's political sphere has been accompanied by the interplay of several factors, including socio-political complexities, identity politics, and regional aspirations. Its formation marked a departure from the traditional bipolarity between the Indian National Congress and the Asom Gana Parishad in the state, offering an alternative platform that resonated with the marginalized Muslim communities. The party's primary objective has been safeguarding the political, economic, and cultural rights of the Muslim community in Assam, as well as other marginalized communities, by advocating for their inclusion and representation. By voicing the concerns of the underrepresented sections of society, the AIUDF has attracted a considerable support base, particularly among the Muslim population and immigrant-origin Muslims, colloquially known as "Miya" Muslims.

Throughout its journey, the AIUDF has been a subject of intense debate and scrutiny. Critics often accuse the party of pursuing a communal agenda and promoting identity-based politics, while supporters argue that it provides a platform for the long-neglected voices in Assam's political landscape. To understand the emergence and role of AIUDF, it becomes imperative to delve into the historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors that have shaped Assam's political environment.

The emergence of the All-India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam can be traced back to the complex socio-political dynamics and historical factors that have shaped the state's demographics and politics. Understanding the background helps provide insights into the factors that led to the formation and rise of AIUDF as a significant political force in Assam. The state shares its borders with several neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh and Bhutan, and has witnessed waves of migration and settlement throughout history. One of the significant factors that contributed to the emergence of AIUDF was the issue of immigration, particularly from East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Assam has faced prolonged concerns about illegal migration from across the border, which has had far-reaching consequences on the demographic composition and the overall socio-political landscape of the state. The influx of immigrants, both legal and illegal, has led to tensions and conflicts between different communities, causing a sense of unease among the indigenous Assamese population.

The IM (DT) Act was enforced in Assam in 1983, during the Assam Movement, by the then-Congress-led central government to show sympathy with Assam's minorities. It outlined a specific procedure for identifying illegal migrants and placed the burden of proof on the complainant, making it difficult to prove someone's illegal status (Nath, 2019, p.35). Over time, many critics argued that the IMDT Act was ineffective in addressing the issue of illegal immigration and posed challenges to the process of identifying and deporting illegal migrants.

The Assam Accord, signed in 1985 between the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement, sought to address the issues of illegal migration and protect the interests of the indigenous population and it recognized the need for a more stringent mechanism to detect and deport illegal migrants. Consequently, in 2005, the Supreme Court of India

declared the IMDT Act as unconstitutional and struck it down. The court stated that the Act placed an unfair burden of proof on the accuser rather than the accused, making it difficult to identify illegal migrants. The revocation of the IM (DT) Act instilled dread among Assamese immigrant Muslims. The Assam unit of Jamiat came forward to address the fears of Muslims in the post-IM (DT) situation. Against this backdrop, Badaruddin Ajmal, president of the Assam Unit of Jamiat, spearheaded the establishment of a new political outfit in the state. The AUIUDF emerged as a political party in 2005 by the prominent Muslim leader Ajmal, the same year the IMDT Act was repealed, to represent the interests of the Muslim community in Assam and champion their political rights. In February 2009, three years after its inception, the AUIUDF re-emerged as the AIUDF, a national party.

While the repeal of the IMDT Act was seen by some as a step towards stricter measures against illegal immigration, it also generated controversy and political debates. The AIUDF's rise can be attributed to various factors, including the socio-economic and political aspirations of the Bengali-speaking Muslim community in Assam, which saw the party as a platform to address their concerns and grievances. It's important to note that the AIUDF emerged as a response to the political and social dynamics of the state. While the repeal of the IMDT Act might have influenced the political discourse around the issue of illegal immigration in Assam, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that it directly caused the emergence of the AIUDF. The rise of the AIUDF is a complex phenomenon shaped by a range of factors, including identity politics, socio-economic factors, and regional dynamics. Assam has a significant Muslim population, accounting for about 34% of the state's population according to the 2011 census. The AIUDF has gained support among Muslims who perceive it as a party that represents their social, economic, and political aspirations. The party has positioned itself as a platform for the representation of minority voices and concerns, appealing to voters who feel marginalized or underrepresented by other political parties. Moreover, the emergence of the AIUDF can be seen as a response to the dominance of major political parties and their inability to adequately address the concerns of the Muslim community. The AIUDF filled a perceived political vacuum by providing an alternative platform for minority representation. It's important to note that these factors are not exhaustive, and the emergence of any political party is influenced by a

combination of multiple socio-political dynamics that vary over time.

The Electoral Performance of AIUDF:

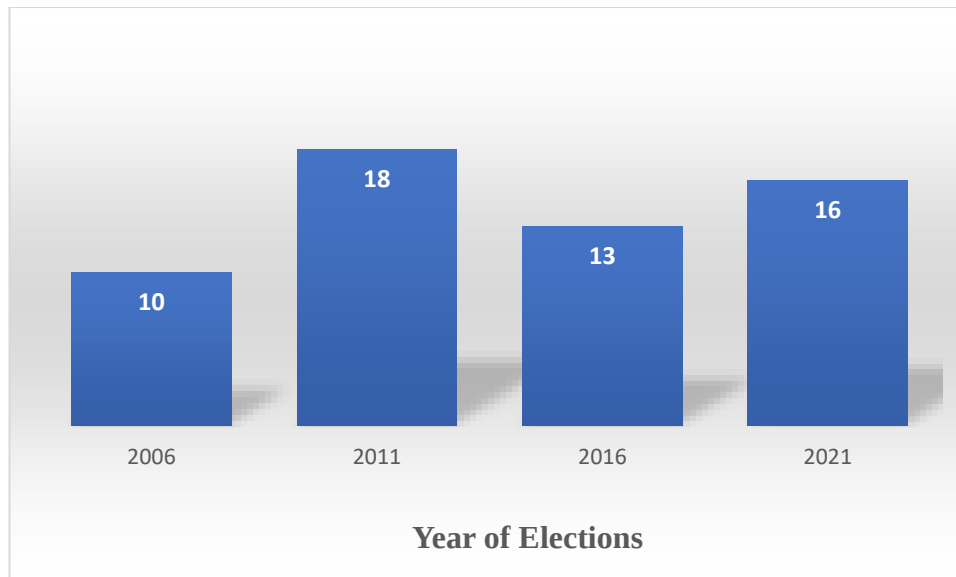
Assamese Muslim immigrants have historically been a reliable voting bloc for Congress. Since independence, the Congress party has dominated the majority of Muslim-dominated constituencies in Assam. The Congress Party's continued rule in Assam after independence was greatly aided by the unwavering support of Muslim immigrants (Borooah, 2013). However, the emergence of the AIUDF in Assam has led to a significant shift in the Muslim vote bank, traditionally associated with the Congress Party. The AIUDF, led by Badruddin Ajmal, has been able to tap into the aspirations and concerns of the Muslim community in the state. With its focus on minority rights and representation, the AIUDF has successfully attracted a substantial portion of the Muslim electorate, leading to a gradual erosion of the Congress Party's support base. The AIUDF's emphasis on addressing socio-economic issues faced by the Muslim population, coupled with its ability to mobilize voters, has resulted in the party gaining significant influence in Muslim-dominated regions of Assam. This shifting dynamic has not only impacted the Congress Party's traditional stronghold but has also altered the political landscape in Assam, providing an alternative platform for Muslim voters to voice their concerns and aspirations.

Table1: Electoral Performance of Major Political Parties in Assembly Elections (2006-2021)

Political Party	2006 Elections		2011 Elections		2016 Elections		2021 Elections	
	Votes Polled	No. of Seats Own	Votes Polled	No. of Seats Own	Votes Polled	No. of seats Own	Votes Polled	No. of Seats Own
	(in %)		(in %)		(in %)		(in %)	
Congress	31.08	53	39.39	78	30.96	26	29.67	29
BJP	11.98	10	11.47	5	29.51	60	33.21	60
AIUDF	9.03	10	12.57	18	13.05	13	9.29	16

Source: Reports published by the Election Commission of India on the Assam Legislative Assembly Election (2006 to 2021)

Figure 1: Seats Own by AIUDF in Assam Legislative Elections (2006-2021)



Source: Reports published by the Election Commission of India on the Assam Legislative Assembly Election (2006 to 2021)

The Assam Legislative Assembly has 126 seats. The AIUDF made its electoral debut in the 2006 Assembly elections in Assam. In the 2006 Assam Legislative Assembly Elections, AIUDF contested in 57 constituencies and it managed to win 10 seats. The 2006 Assembly elections in Assam witnessed a multi-cornered contest among several political parties, including the Indian National Congress (INC), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), BJP, AIUDF, and BPF. The All-India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) emerged as a significant player during these elections, making a substantial impact on the political landscape of Assam. In the election results, no single party secured an absolute majority in the Assembly. In the 2006 Assembly Elections, the Indian National Congress (INC) emerged as the single largest party, winning 53 seats out of the total 126 seats. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) secured 24 seats, while both the AIUDF and BJP managed to win 10 seats, making it the third-largest party in terms of seat share. AGP was the main rival of the Congress in the state, and BJP in the Centre. Hence, there was little possibility of making a coalition government by the Congress with the help of AGP or BJP. In this election, the Bodoland People's Progressive Front (BPPF) was led by Hagrama Mohilary. The BPPF has swept the western Bodo-dominated region. With 12 seats, the Bodoland People's Progressive Front (Hagrama group) played kingmaker, ensuring the Congress' second consecutive term in Dispur (Talukdar, 2006). During the elections, AIUDF leaders expected that they would play the role of Kingmaker in the coalition government; nevertheless, they were unable to be a part of this government. The party gained

popularity among the Muslim community, especially in the lower and middle Assam region of Brahmaputra Valley and Muslim-dominated areas of Barak Valley. Although this party have faced criticism from opponents who accused it of pursuing a divisive agenda and playing communal politics, two non-Muslim candidates Guneshawar Das from the Raha LAC and Dr Aditya Langthasa from Hojai LAC were elected in this election.

The 2011 Assam Assembly election results saw the Indian National Congress (INC) emerge as the single largest party, winning 78 out of the 126 seats. The AIUDF performed well in the election, winning 18 seats and becoming the second-largest party in the Assembly as well as emerging as the main opposition party in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Political parties had failed to attain the Magic figure, with just 21 out of 126 to sit in the opposition. In this election, the AIUDF made significant gains compared to the previous elections. It was able to secure a higher number of seats and increase its vote share. The party's performance was seen as a reflection of the growing influence of the Muslim community in Assam's politics. The AIUDF's rise can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, it tapped into the sentiment of a section of the population that felt marginalized and underrepresented. The party focused on issues such as minority rights, social justice, and the development of marginalized communities. This resonated with a significant portion of the electorate, particularly in areas with a substantial Muslim population. Despite the electoral successes, Ajmal and his party couldn't find acceptability or become part of the government. In 2011, former Congress chief minister Tarun Gogoi famously said "Who is Badruddin?" when he was questioned about the possibility of a tie-up with Ajmal's party for the assembly polls (Parashar, 2021). Two non-Muslim MLAs, Gopinath Das of Boko LAC and Swapan Kar of Lumding LAC, were elected to the Legislative Assembly from this party in this election despite being accused it as the party of the Bengali-speaking Muslims only.

The 2016 Assembly elections in Assam were significant as they marked a turning point in the political landscape of the state. The elections were held in two phases on April 4 and April 11, 2016, to elect members to the 126-seat Legislative Assembly of Assam. The key players in the elections were the Indian National Congress (INC), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the All-India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), among others.

One of the crucial aspects of the 2016 Assembly elections in Assam was the formation of pre-poll alliances. The BJP formed a pre-poll alliance called the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) with several regional parties like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF). This alliance aimed to consolidate anti-Congress votes and provide a unified front against the ruling party. Ultimately, the BJP-led alliance emerged victorious in the 2016 Assembly elections. The BJP won 60 seats, while its allies, the AGP and the BPF, secured 14 and 12 seats, respectively. This gave the alliance a comfortable majority to form the government in Assam. On the other hand, the INC faced a significant defeat, winning only 26 seats.

The AIUDF's performance fell short of their expectations. The party contested 74 out of 126 seats in the 2016 Assam Assembly elections. In the 2016 Assam Legislative Assembly elections, the AIUDF's performance witnessed a slight decline, as it secured 13 seats, retaining its position as a prominent party in the state. The party secured a vote share of around 13% in the election, indicating a significant support base.

During the 2021 Assembly Elections in Assam, several political parties formed pre-poll alliances to bolster their chances of winning. The NDA was led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and included several regional parties such as the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL). The alliance aimed to retain power in Assam. On the other hand, the Mahajot was an alliance of opposition parties, primarily led by the Indian National Congress (INC). The AIUDF was a member of the Grand Alliance, which included the BPF and communist parties also. The NDA emerged victorious in the 2021 Assam Assembly Elections. In this election, the BJP won 60 seats, while the AGP won 9 seats, and the UPPL won 6 seats. Together, they secured a comfortable majority in the 126-member Assembly. The incumbent BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) retained power with 75 seats, marking the first time in the state's history that a non-INC alliance has won consecutive mandates. The Mahajot failed to achieve its desired outcome. The Indian National Congress (INC) won 29 seats, the AIUDF won 16 seats, the CPI(M) won 1 seat, and the CPI won 1 seat. Despite the alliance's efforts, they fell short of a majority. The NDA's victory allowed the BJP to retain power in Assam, and Himanta Bishaw Sarma was elected to the position of Chief Minister of Assam. This marked the

second consecutive term for the BJP-led government in the state.

As discussed, the AIUDF contested the 2021 Assam Assembly elections as part of the 'Mahajot' or 'Grand Alliance'. However, in the 2021 elections, the AIUDF did not perform as well as it had hoped. The party managed to win only 16 out of the 20 seats it contested, down from its previous tally of 13 seats in the 2016 elections. Despite its efforts, the AIUDF's performance in terms of seat share did not significantly impact the overall outcome of the elections. In this election, AIUDF's vote share was around 9 % which is almost 4 % less than the 2016 Assembly Elections. The AIUDF has traditionally focused on consolidating the Muslim vote in Assam. In the 2021 elections, it continued to be seen as a party representing the interests of the Muslim community, which constitutes a significant portion of the state's population. It was successful in consolidating Muslim votes in this election as out of 20 contested seats the party owns 16 seats and the winning percentage stood at 80, its performance was notable considering the fragmented nature of the opposition. The party aimed to garner support from Muslims by highlighting issues such as religious identity, minority rights, and social and economic development within their communities. The other parties of the 'Grand Alliance' failed to perform well in this election.

The INC, being the principal opposition party in Assam, played a significant role in the Grand Alliance. However, the party faced a setback as it failed to make significant gains in the election. Nevertheless, the INC managed to retain its traditional support base in certain regions, it struggled to make substantial inroads against the BJP. For instance, INC contested 95 seats and owns only 29 seats and the winning percentage is only around 30. Similarly, a strong ally of the 'Grand Alliance' BPF contested from 12 seats and it managed to win only 4 seats and the winning percentage stood at only 33. The BPF, a regional party representing the interests of the Bodo community, was a part of the Grand Alliance. However, it suffered an adverse blow in the election. The party won only 4 seats out of the 12 it contested, which was a significant decrease from its performance in the previous election when it won 12 seats. The BPF lost its stronghold in the Bodoland Territorial Region to the BJP, which allied with another Bodo party. Thus, it has been seen that among all the parties of the 'Grand Alliance' only AIUDF performed well in winning seats.

Overall, the Grand Alliance failed to achieve its desired outcome in the 2021 Assam Assembly Elections. The BJP-led NDA emerged victorious, winning a comfortable majority in the assembly. The alliance partners, INC, AIUDF, and BPF, faced challenges in expanding their support bases and failed to make significant gains compared to their previous performances.

After its formation in 2005, AIUDF contested Assembly elections in the state in 2006. The party has demonstrated its presence in the Muslim-dominated districts of the middle and lower Brahmaputra Valley as well as the Muslim-dominated regions of the Barak Valley. However, it was unsuccessful in attracting electors in the non-Muslim-dominated districts of Upper Assam, Hill districts, and Barak Valley in various elections in the state. The party has been most successful in constituencies dominated by Muslim immigrants. During the last four Assembly elections in the Brahmaputra valley, the party was unable to influence Assamese Muslims, although a sizable portion of neo-Assamese voted for them (Nath, 2019). The party was unable to find candidates for several seats in the seven upper Assam districts (Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Lakhimpur, and Dhemaji) (ibid.). These districts of upper Assam have traditionally been known as the home of Assamese Muslims, primarily of the Garia and Maria groups. These seven districts include 34 legislative constituencies, and the AIUDF has previously fought elections from 6, 10, and 8 of them respectively in 2006, 2011, and 2016. (Nath, 2016). The party joined the 'Grand Alliance' in 2021 and did not propose any candidates from these districts.

Against this scenario, the dominance of AIUDF has been witnessed in the districts where Muslims are the majority. In the 2006 elections, the party won 4 seats from the undivided Nagaon district, 3 seats from the undivided Dhubri district and each seat respectively from the three districts of Barak Valley, these districts are Karimganj, Hailakandi and Cachar. In the 2011 elections, the party got only one seat from the Cachar district of Barak Valley. On the contrary, AIUDF was able to show a significant impact in the district of Goalpara, undivided Barpeta, Dhubri and Nagaon districts. In Barpeta the party secured 5 seats, in Dhubri 4 seats, in Nagaon 4 seats and in Goalpara 3 seats. In the 2016 elections, AIUDF owns 3 seats from the Hailakandi district and 1 seat from the Karimganj district of Barak Valley. On the other hand, in the Brahmaputra Valley, the party got 1 seat from Barpeta, 3 seats from Dhubri, 2 from Nagaon and 1 from Goalpara district. Furthermore, in

the recent 2021 elections, the party was able to get 5 MLAs from Barak Valley, representing 1 from Karimganj, 3 from Hailakandi and 1 from Cachar. Contrarily, from Brahmaputra Valley the party secured 5 seats from Dhubri, 3 from Barpeta, and 2 from Nagaon district. Interestingly, it has been found that the party performed very well in the districts where Muslims constitute a sizeable population. According to the 2011 Census Report, in the Dhubri district Muslim population constitutes 79.67, the Barpeta district accounts for 70.74% Muslim population, and in the Nagaon district, the Muslim population makes up 55.36% of the total district population, and the Goalpara district comprises 57.52% Muslim population. On the other hand, the Hailakandi, Karimganj, and Cachar districts of the Barak Valley comprise 60.31, 56.36 and 37.71 per cent of the Muslim population. Apart from these 7 districts of Brahmaputra and Barak Valley, the party won one seat from the Boko constituency of Kamrup (Rural) in 2011. In 2016 the party won one seat from the Abhayapuri constituency of the Bongaigaon district and the Naoboicha constituency of the Lakhimpur district. For the first time, the party won a seat from the Dalgaoon constituency of Darrang district in 2021. Although the districts Darrang, Bongaogaon and Morigaon constitute more than half of the Muslim population, AIUDF failed to consolidate the Muslim votes in these districts. It indicates that not all Assamese Muslims have embraced this party with similar enthusiasm.

Conclusion: In a nutshell, the emergence and political performance of the AIUDF in Assam have had significant implications for the state's political landscape. The AIUDF, led by Badruddin Ajmal, rose to prominence in the early 2000s by mobilizing the support of the state's Muslim population, which had felt marginalized and underrepresented in mainstream politics. The AIUDF's emergence can be seen as a response to the growing demand for representation and the desire for a political platform that addresses the specific concerns and aspirations of the Muslim community in Assam. By highlighting issues such as minority rights, social justice, and inclusive development, the AIUDF successfully appealed to a significant voter base, particularly in the lower Assam region.

The political performance of the AIUDF has been notable, especially in terms of electoral gains. The party has consistently secured a considerable number of seats in the state assembly, thereby becoming a significant player in Assam's politics. Its presence has played a role in reshaping the dynamics of power

and fostering a more competitive political environment in the state. However, the AIUDF's rise has not been without controversy. Critics have accused the party of playing divisive identity politics and focusing solely on the interests of the Muslim community, which they argue undermines the principles of secularism and social harmony. The party's opponents often associate it with illegal immigration and have raised concerns about its alleged sympathies towards immigrants from Bangladesh.

The AIUDF's political performance also reflects the complex and evolving nature of Assam's socio-political landscape. Assam, with its diverse ethnic and religious makeup, has witnessed various political movements and realignments over the years. The emergence of the AIUDF is a manifestation of the changing dynamics and the quest for political representation by marginalized groups. Looking ahead, the AIUDF's future will depend on its ability to expand its support base beyond its traditional stronghold and address the concerns of a broader cross-section of society. As Assam continues to grapple with issues such as economic development, social cohesion, and identity politics, the AIUDF will need to strike a balance between advocating for the rights of its core constituency and reaching out to other communities to broaden its appeal.

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