

The Electoral Process in India's State of Arunachal Pradesh: A Historical Analysis.

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Abstract

In Arunachal Pradesh, the electoral process and party politics make a late entry as the state's political scenario differed from the rest of India. The political journey undertaken by the state witnessed many ups and downs to reaching the current political stage. Arunachal Pradesh, a tribal-dominated state in northeastern India, has been in isolation for a long time from the modern-day concept of electoral politics and party activities in the state. The socio-political functions of the state were governed by its distinct traditional village councils known differently by different tribes, such as the Abala system of the Idu Mishmi tribe, Buliyang of Apatani tribe, Kebang among the Adi tribe, Nyaly among the Nishi tribe, so on. The functioning and legitimization of the modern representative democratic process in the state were expressed with the introduction of Panchayati raj institutions in 1969, and adult franchise rights were extended to Arunachal people in Panchayat elections in the year 1972. On 15th August 1975, the provincial legislative Assembly was established in Arunachal Pradesh. Conversion of the Pradesh Council and councillor into the provincial Legislative Assembly continues until today. This Article gives a historical account of the Assembly and parliamentary elections in Arunachal Pradesh. The paper also analyzed and explained how the electoral process started in India's Eastern state and how it evolved.

INTRODUCTION

Electoral politics in the modern and real democratic sense is a new experience for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. In analyzing the political process in the state, A.C. Talukdar, (1985: 1) remarks "Arunachal Pradesh is the youngest sub-polity of India to be introduced to the process of modern participatory politics.

The political history of Arunachal Pradesh is a long history of political isolation. The young state of Arunachal Pradesh acquired its present political status through evolution. It passed through the stages of Frontier tracts, Frontier Agency, Union territory and finally to the 24th state of the Indian Union. Although the parliamentary elections in almost all of India were held in 1951-52, the people of Arunachal tested the franchise right after 1977 the first parliamentary election was held. Arunachal was provided with one Lok Sabha seat from 1952 onwards, but it was based on the nomination of the President of India among the Schedule Tribe of the area by section 3 read with section 4 of the Representative of People Act 1950. Later, the North-Eastern Areas (reorganization) Act 1971 provided one seat each in the two Lok Sabha seats and one Rajya Sabha seat for Arunachal Pradesh, which was to be filled through direct election instead of the previous practice of nomination. Though in 1972, an adult franchise was introduced for Panchayat elections, the voting right was first time extended to the people of Arunachal Pradesh in 1977 by a special provision of the Representation of People's Act 1951. The first general elections for Arunachal Pradesh were held on March 1977 and introduced party politics in the then Union territory (now State). The people of Arunachal were also not represented in the Legislative Assembly of the State of

Assam. One possible reason for withholding voting rights was, as S.K. Chaube pointed out, "The anthropological view that the elections are alien to the tribal culture". The Gopinath Bordoloi sub-committee did not favour extending franchise rights to the North East Frontier Agency as Arunachal was known earlier. The committee found that the level of consciousness among tribes was quite low.

The electoral process and its genesis

Though the modern-day electoral process was started late, the democratic culture has been a practice since time immemorial through the existence and working of traditional village councils in different forms among different tribal groups. The traditional village institutions like Kebang of Adis are essentially democratic in their functions and structure. The electoral system's elements were also not entirely unknown to the tribal people here. On record, the Monpa tribe of Tawang and Kameng District traditionally employed modern election methods in selecting tsorgens of Village heads.

Verrier Elwin explains the system: "The election of tsorgens is traditionally initiated at the Kharchung level, on the initiative of the various tsoblas. The political process began in 1967; before that, the people of NEFA had no opportunity to exercise their franchise rights. It was parliament that used to make laws for the NEFA. The people were represented in the Lok Sabha by a nominated member, whom the President of India nominated, but with gradual consciousness, people became aware of the need for political participation. The law-making body was in Delhi, and the head of the administration, there was the absence of representative institutions through which

the people of NEFA could participate in the policy-making. By this period, the unwillingness of the NEFA polity to stay with Assam was informed of the integration of NEFA to consider the demand of the tribe of NEFA. The Government of India appointed a committee known as Daying Ering Committee. The committee thoroughly studied the people's political conscience and recommended introducing a three-tier panchayat system in NEFA: the beginning of a representative form of Government. The British Government took over the control of Assam from the last Ahom king in 1838. The British, during these days, neither had the time nor the interest to introduce any administration in the North-East frontier region (now Arunachal Pradesh). They remained concerned only with protecting their interests from hill tribes and taking out occasional punitive expeditions.

Arunachal Pradesh's origin can be traced back to the introduction of the Inner Line regulation in 1873 by the British Government. The North-East Frontier tracts, as distinct from administrative units of Assam, began to emerge when in 1875-76, the Inner Line of Lakhimpur and Darrang district was specified, applying the regulation of 1873. The Inner Line, for the first time, separated some tracts inhabited by the tribal people from the district of Assam and the British Authority. The Panchayati Raj institution was introduced as early as 1969, which initiated the state's modern participatory political process. Moreover, the North-East Frontier Agency Administration regulatory, 1971 introduced an electoral system in the village panchayats. The 1971 amendment changed the provisions of the 1967 regulation related to the Gram Panchayats to create a new body to be elected according to the tribal customary methods by the residents of a village or village falling within a Gram Panchayat. The Arunachal Pradesh Gram Panchayat (Constitution) Rules, 1972, spelt out certain details regarding the election of the members of Gram Panchayat, but it did not say anything about the actual process of election. This rule says that the Deputy Commissioner has to prepare a list of all adults in the Gram Panchayat area. The purpose of the Panchayats election is to be conducted by a presiding officer to be appointed. Regarding the Rajya Sabha seat, the candidate was selected by the Pradesh Council through an election process. An electoral college consisting of the Zila Parishads elects a candidate to be nominated for a Lok Sabha seat. Each Zila Parishad consists of all the vice-Presidents of all Anchal Samitis within its jurisdiction, one representative from each Anchal Samiti in the District, and not more than six persons to be nominated by the Administrator to secure representation in the Zila Parishad. The seats to be filled were hotly contested. Five contestants were in the fray for the first Lok Sabha seat-three from Siang district and two from Lohit District in the Arunachal East Constituency. The first Member of Parliament was Shri Chowkhamon Gohain, followed by Dr Daying Ering. In 1972 Shri Todak Basar became the first member of the Rajya Sabha.

Even with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj, the formal pattern of electoral behaviour could not be seen as elections to the Panchayats followed existing tribal customs. Furthermore, any election based on Universal Adult Franchise did not take place in the state till 1977. The year 1977 saw the first parliamentary election with only a section of the population exercising their franchise as there was no election in the Arunachal West parliamentary constituency, the lone candidates being elected uncontested. The first Assembly election in 1978 ensured the popular participation of the people of Arunachal in any election in the entire state.

The party politics made its first entry into the state on October 1972 with the foundation of the unit of the Indian

Table 1: Party position in Arunachal Pradesh Assembly Election in 1978

Sl.no	Party	No. of contestants	Seats won	%	Valid votes polled
1	Janata Party	30	17	56.67	66905
2	PPA	23	8	26.67	48075
3	Cong- (I)	1	0	00.00	720
4	Independents	32	5	16.67	43287

Source: Basic statistical data and election results (1978-1990). Issued by Chief Electoral Officer, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

National Congress. The two nominated members of parliament joined Indian National Congress Party. The party politics was activated by the first general election in the year 1977.

The Election Process and Assembly Election

As a natural outcome, the demand for a legislative Assembly was pressed in every sitting of the Pradesh Council, which made the union government send a study team to assess the standard of parliamentary acumen attained by the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The union government, after analyzing all aspects, agreed to the demand of the people for a legislative Assembly, and on 15th August 1975, the Pradesh Council was converted into the provisional Legislative Assembly of a union territory, with all the members of the Pradesh Council becoming members of the Provisional Legislative Assembly and the Councilors being given the rank of ministers.

Every Assembly election of the erstwhile union territory of Arunachal Pradesh was held in 1978. The Assembly consisted of 33 members, of which 30 were elected directly by the people, and 3 were nominated. This election occurred amid certain changes in the state's political scene. With the formation of the Govt. at the central by the Janata Party, the state unit of the Congress Party, then in power in the state, joined the Janata Party. Another change that occurred was the entry of the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA), the first regional party formed in 1977, into the electoral scene for the first time.

Three recognized political parties were in the fray in the first Assembly Elections. Janata party contested 30 seats, PPA in 23 and Congress-I in 1, whereas the number of candidates who contested without any party affiliation was 32. The total number of voters was 2,39,945, and the number of voters in each constituency varied from 3596 (Anini of Dibang Valley District) and 13815 (Ziro of Lower Subansiri). Women voters outnumber their male counterparts in 12 constituencies. The election had been conducted smoothly in the whole part of Arunachal. In 25 per cent of the Constituencies, the record polling of 80 per cent was recorded. The average voter turnout was 68.59 per cent. Janata Party was returned to power with 17 seats, including 2 seats where the candidates were elected un-contested (Darang-Kalaktang and Niauxa Kanubari) and PPA begged 8 seats. % seats had gone to the Independents. Two women candidates contested this election, but they did not find favour with the voters.

The Breakdown of the Janata Ministry at the centre also created a situation of political instability in the State. The political game of defection and re-defection had made inroads in the State even when most tribes were not politically conscious. The Thungon Ministry, which remained in power for a brief period of one and half years, was voted out of power because of defection in his party. With the support of the defectors, a PPA government headed by Tomo Riba came to power. To meet the demand of the potential defectors from the Janata party, PPA rechristened itself as the United Peoples Party of Arunachal (UPPA). The PPA

Table 2: Party position in Arunachal Pradesh Assembly Election in 1980

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seats won	%polled*	Valid votes
1	PPA	27	13	43.33	70922
2	Cong- (I)	29	13	43.33	64465
3	Cong-(U)	11	00	00.00	8643
4	Independents	28	04	13.34	26783

Source: Basic Statistical Data and Election Results, (1978-1990), issued by Chief Electoral Officer Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

government lasted for only 47 days due to re-defections. As a result, the Assembly was dissolved on November 1979. Thus, within a short span of 2 years, the people of Arunachal Pradesh were called upon to elect a new Assembly.

The second Assembly election of Arunachal Pradesh was held on 3rd January 1980, simultaneously with the 7th Lok Sabha election due to President rule in the State imposition in 1979. The Political Parties, which participated in the Assembly elections of 1980, comprised the Congress (U) and the PPA. Surprisingly the Janata party that formed the government in the last Assembly did not put up its candidates in any constituencies. The second Assembly elections of Arunachal Pradesh exemplify the re-emergence of Congress (I) in the politics of Arunachal. The party won 13 seats, shared equal seats with PPA, and emerged as the jointly single largest party with PPA. Congress (U) entered the fray with the 11 candidates but failed to open its account. There were 28 independent candidates, out of which 4 were elected. Two women candidates, one Independent and one PPA candidate; contested in this election. The PPA candidates from the Seppa constituency of East kameng became the first elected lady member of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly. No contest took place in the 29-Niausa-Kanubari constituency for the second consecutive time as PPA candidates were elected unopposed. In the 1980 elections, 95 candidates contested as compared to 86 in the 1978 Assembly election.

**Excluding 29-Niausa-Kanubari Assembly Constituency where the Candidates were elected un-Contested.*

A bye-election was held in the 22-Roing Assembly Constituency on 29th April 1983 to fill vacant seats caused due to the death of the sitting member. It was the first time voting machines were used in a bye-election to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh. There were 8808 voters in the constituency. The independent candidates and 1 from Congress-(I) and PPA contested the bye-election. Shri Mukut Mithi, an Independent candidate, got elected by securing 44.45 per cent of the votes.

With the breakdown of the Janata Ministry at central, the leaders who merged with Janata Party joined back to INC. Congress came back with impressive seats by securing 13 seats out of a total of 30 seats in the Legislative Assembly. The Congress (I) formed the Government under the Chief Ministership of Mr Gegong Apang.

The Third Legislative Assembly election of Arunachal Pradesh was held on 24th December 1984 along with the eighth Lok Sabha of India. The Assembly election of 1984 was marked by the establishment of Congress (I) as the most dominant political party in the state. The Congress (I) secured 21 seats in the election out of 30 and polled 42.49 per cent of valid votes in its favour. The People's Party of Arunachal suffered a severe setback securing only 4 seats in the Assembly and securing 15.52 per cent of valid votes polled. The Bharatiya Janata Party registered its entry in the psephological map of the state by begging for one seat. About 8 per cent of the

Table 3: Party position in Arunachal Pradesh Assembly Election in 1984

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seats won	Polled %	Valid votes polled
1	Cong-(I)	30	21	71.00	95482
2	PPA	13	04	13.33	34898
3	BJP	06	01	03.34	17280
4	Janata party	03	00	00.00	831
5	Independent	63	04	13.33	76224

Source: Basic Statistical data and Election Result (1978-1990) issued by Chief Electoral Officer, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

valid votes polled went in its favour. The Janata Party contested 3 seats, and one candidate was elected. In this election, 63 independent candidates contested against 28 in 1980. It marked a remarkable rise in Independent candidates. However, only 4 candidates could enter the Legislative Assembly. Congress-(I), headed by Mr Gegong Apang, played a prominent role in the election and formed the Government with mandates of 21 seats in the Assembly election. The 29-Niausa-Kanubari constituency was again in focus due to the record number of 10 candidates contested this time (the largest so far in any general election in the state). There was no contest in the last two elections, the candidates being elected unopposed. The percentage of polls continued to be high, i.e., 74.46% in the 1984 election. In total, 44 candidates have forfeited their security deposits.

**Excluding 2-Tawang, 3-Mukto, and 7-Koloriang Assembly constituencies where the candidates elected uncontested.*

The fourth Legislative Assembly election of Arunachal Pradesh was held on 27th February and completed on 5th March 1990. The fourth Legislative Assembly election of 1990 witnessed various changes in the political scenario of Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh got new political status and became the 24th state of the Union of India on 20th February 1987. The provisional Legislative Assembly during union territory status becomes a full-fledged Legislative Assembly. The number of seats in the Legislative Assembly increased from the strength of 30 seats to 60 seats. Another notable factor was that the People's Party of Arunachal did not appear on the electoral scene because it assimilated with the Janata Dal following the formation of the National Front Government in the Centre. The total electorate in the 1990 election was 5,11,205 compared to 3,19,046 in 1984. The Congress-(I) was once again returned to power. The party secured 37 seats and 44.25 per cent of valid votes polled. The Janata Dal begged 11 seats while the Janata Party won only one seat. 11 seats had gone to independents. Shri Thupten Tempa and Shri Dorjee Khandu, both Congress-(I) candidates, were elected unopposed from 2-Tawang and 3-Mukto constituencies, respectively. 7 candidates contested from 58 Kanubari constituency.

**Excluding 2-Tawang land 3-Mukto Assembly constituencies where the candidates elected uncontested.*

The fifth general election to the Legislative Assembly election of Arunachal Pradesh was held on March 1995. The 1995 Assembly elections show the complete dominance of INC as the party secured 43 seats in the State Assembly. In the fifth Assembly election, Congress (I) registered the highest margin comparatively with other Assembly elections held in the state so far in terms of seats and votes share secured. The 1995 Assembly election was marked by the absence of any strong opposition party in the state. All the non-Congress-(I) party, members of the Legislative Assembly, joined the ruling party as a member of the

Table 4: party position in arunachal pradesh assembly election 1990

Sl.no	Party	No of contestant	Seat won	Polled %	Valid votes polled*
1	Cong-(I)	59	37	61.67	154479
2	Janata Dal	52	11	18.33	116392
3	Janata Part	07	01	01.67	7959
4	Independents	52	11	18.33	70310

Source: Basic statistical data and Election results issued by the Chief Electoral Officer.

party or as its associate members. The candidates who contested on Janata Dal and Janata Party tickets were mostly the rebel candidates of Congress-(I) who were denied party tickets. The BJP, which announced its intention to contest the 1995 election, hardly had any base in the state.

There were 4 women candidates out of a total of 173 contestants. The percentage of valid votes polled was 79.55%. In 16 Constituencies, female voters outnumber their male counter-parts voters. The straight fight was recorded in as many as 22 constituencies. No candidates in this election were elected unopposed, unlike in previous elections. The total electorate was 5,33,285 including 2,49,823(46.85%) women voters. The Congress-(I) Party registered the highest achievement compared to any Assembly Elections held so far, both in terms of seats and votes. It secured 71.67 per cent of seats and 50.73 per cent of valid votes polled. BJP could not win a single seat and polled only 03.37 per cent of votes, thereby losing 4.32 per cent of votes and the only seats secured in 1984 to Congress (I), Janata Dal, which became a spent force in the state after its original state unit merged with the Congress-(I) got only 17.26 per cent of votes. It lost 16.08 per cent of its votes and 8 seats to Congress-(I).

Thus in the 1995 election, Congress-(I) became the sole gainer of the swings of votes. A small per cent of the votes (5.96%) had gone to Independents. The entry of religious leaders into electoral politics has created a break in the state's political traditions. No religious leader ever contested in any Assembly elections till the 1995 election, in which two Rinpoches (religious heads in Buddhism) contested from Tawang District. T.G Rinpoche was elected from 1-Lumla Constituency. He secured 56.83% of the valid votes polled. Another religious head unsuccessfully contested from the 2-Tawang constituency and lost by a margin of only 209 votes, only.

From the above table, it is clear that the INC has been remarkably successful in winning over the faith of the state's people and has repeatedly proved that it is the only party that has percolated with the people. Gegong Apang was again sworn in as the Chief Minister for the fourth consecutive term.

The sixth legislative Assembly election in Arunachal Pradesh was held in 1999. The regional party Arunachal Congress government headed by Gegong Apang was voted out of power in this election. Shri Mukut Mithi-led Indian National

Table 5: Electoral Performance Assembly Election 1995

Sl.no	Political Parties	Seats won	Seats contested	Valid votes Polled
1	INC	43	60	215514
2	Janata Dal	03	34	73325
3	BJP	00	15	143116
4	Janata Party	02	05	10748
5	Independents	12	59	110879

Source: Basic statistical data and election results issued by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Table 6: electoral performance assembly election 1999

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seats won	%	Valid voters polled*
1	Cong-(I)	60	54	83.33	213097
2	A.C	38	01	01.66	68645
3	BJP	23	00	00.00	44556
4	NCP	21	04	06.00	35967
5	AJBP	01	00	00.00	425
6	Independent	29	02	03.33	48842

Source: Basic statistical Data and election results issued by Chief Electoral Officer.

Congress won its highest-ever margin with 54 seats out of 56 contested Assembly seats. The highest margin so far by the party in the history of the Arunachal State Assembly election. 1999 saw the three national political parties enter the electoral fray: Congress-(I), BJP, and Nationalist Congress Party. Besides three national parties, regional Arunachal Congress and Independents candidates contested in the election. The newly floated Ajeya Bharat Party also fielded one candidate each in Assembly and Lok Sabha seats.

There were 4 women contestants in the election fray, of which BJP fielded two candidates, one by Arunachal Congress and another was an independent candidate. Notably, the ruling Congress-(I) failed to nominate a single woman in this election. An independent candidate from the 8-Bameng constituency was the lone woman to be elected. And she secured 43.86 percent of the valid votes polled.

**Excluding 2-Tawang, 41-Anini, 43-Roing, and 55-Khonsa (East) Assembly constituencies where the candidates elected uncontested.*

In the 7th Legislative Assembly 2004, the Indian National Congress won 34 seats. Shri Gegong Apang returned to his parent party from BJP and dislodged his long political adversary Mukut Mithi, then undisputed Congress leader-(I). The 2004 Assembly election was marked by several changes as many old congress veteran leaders were defeated; due to this, Congress could secure 34 seats which is 19 fewer seats than the previous election.

**Excluding 3-Mukto, 4-Dirang Assembly Constituencies where the candidates elected uncontested.*

The 8th Legislative Assembly, since 1978, union territory time, and the fifth legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh, after being granted its complete statehood in the Arunachal Pradesh Act, were held in October 2009. This time leadership provided by the then Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu, Congress fielded the highest number of candidates, and overall, there were 157 candidates from the various political parties in the fray for 60 Assembly seats. Two candidates from the Indian National Congress party were elected unopposed from 3-Mukto, and 4-Dirang Assembly Constituencies, respectively.

**Excluding 1-Lumla, 2-Tawang, and 3-Mukto Assembly Constituencies where the member elected unopposed*

The ninth state Assembly election was pre-pounded six months before the actual schedule of the election, and it was a big gamble played by the Congress under the leadership of Nabam Tuki, the then Chief Minister, a record number of 11 elected un-opposed members of legislative Assembly was chosen. As polled pandits have predicted, it was pre-pounded to avoid as Congress facing a rout in all over the Country, Congress retaining 35 seats and securing a majority in the 60-member Assembly.

Table 7: Electoral performance assembly election 2004

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seats won	%	Valid votes polled*
1	Cong-(I)	60	34	55	204944
2	A.C	11	02	3.33	16956
3	BJP	39	09	15	87303
4	NCP	10	02	3.33	19673
5	Independents	48	13	23.33	130645

Source: Basic statistical Data and election results issued by Chief Electoral Officer.

Table 8: Electoral performance assembly election 2009

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seats won	% of vote	Valid votes polled
1	INC	60	42	50.38	2,89,501
2	BJP	18	03	5.21	29,929
3	NCP	36	05	19.33	1,11,098
4	PPA	11	04	7.27	41,780
5	AITC	26	05	15.04	86,406
6	JD(U)	3	00	0.62	3,584
7	IND	3	01	2.15	12,364

Source: Basic statistical data from <http://www.elections.in>

**Excluding 3-Mukto, 4-Dirang, 11-Seppa (West), 12-Pakke-Kessang, 14-Doimukh, 15-Sagalee, 18-Palin, 19-Nyapin, 22-Nacho, 23-Taliha, 39-Mebo Assembly Constituencies where the candidates elected unopposed.*

Several first-timers marked the 2019 Assembly election; as many as 20 newcomers won the Assembly election in Arunachal Pradesh this time, most of which belonged to the ruling BJP. Many political heavyweights lost to first-timer like Goruk Pordung defeated former home Minister Kumar Wai from Bameng Assembly Constituency, and Arunachal Pradesh Congress President Takam Sanjoy was defeated by new entrant Jummum Ete Deori from Lekang Assembly Constituency, and Outgoing speaker Tenzing Norbu Thondok of the BJP from Kalaktang Assembly Constituency.

**Excluded 4-Dirang, 16-Yachuli, and 31-Along (East) Assembly Constituencies where the member was elected unopposed.*

One of the significant and interesting features of the electoral politics of Arunachal Pradesh is that the political leaders at any level are not permanently attached to a party. Pragmatism, rather than ideology, dictates their political behaviour. A leader joins a party not because of its ideology or commitment to that party but to contest an election so that he becomes a part of the government. No leader in Arunachal Pradesh remained committed to any particular party. All leaders in the state have joined one or another party in their political careers. Party leaders and party workers leave the party once their elected representatives decide so. Kiren Rijiju BJP stalwart and present chief minister Prema Khandu had changed their political allegiance. Prema Khandu, whose father was a veteran Congress leader and became Chief Minister from 2007 to 2011, was a minister in Congress reign under the leadership of chief minister Nabam Tuki from 2011 to 2015.

The first defection politics started in the state just before the first legislative Assembly election in 1978. Immediately after the formation of the Janata Party government in New Delhi, the state unit of the Congress party joined the Janata Party and fought election 1978 elections as Janata candidates. It may be mentioned here that the two nominated members of parliament

Table 9: Electoral performance assembly election 2014

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seat won	% of vote	Valid votes polled
1	INC	60	42	49.50	2,51,575
2	BJP	42	11	30.97	1,57,412
3	NCP	9	00	3.84	19,505
4	PPA	16	05	8.96	45,532
5	AAP	1	00	0.03	142
6	NPF	11	00	0.75	3,788
7	IND	16	02	4.92	24,985
8	NOTA	60	100.00	1.05	5,322

Source: Basic statistical data from <http://www.elections.in>

Table 10: Electoral performance assembly election 2019

Sl.no	Party	No of contestants	Seat won	% of vote	Valid votes polled
1	BJP	60	41	50.86	3,15,540
2	INC	46	04	16.85	1,04,540
3	NPP	30	05	14.56	90,347
4	PPA	9	01	1.73	10,714
5	JD(U)	15	07	9.88	61,325
6	JD(S)	12	00	2.16	13,378
7	AIP	1	00	0.04	232
8	IND	11	02	1.93	18,528
9	NOTA	57	100.00	0.11	5,824

Source: Basic statistical data from <http://www.elections.in>

joined the Congress party in 1972. In 1975 Pradesh Council was converted into a provisional Legislative Assembly with the council of ministers headed by Congress-I Chief Minister Prema Khandu Thongun. The people of the state did not know any political party other than Indian National Congress then. The party was voted to power, and P.K Thongun was re-elected as the Chief Minister in the 1978 election. The political game of defection and re-defection once again started with the breakdown of the Janata Ministry at the central. The Thongun Ministry and he remained in power for a brief period of one and half years and was reduced to a minority because of defection in his party. With the support of the defectors, the Peoples Party of Arunachal formed the government headed by Tomo Riba for the first time. However, the PPA government lasted for only 47 days due to defections in the party, as a result of which the Assembly was dissolved on November 1979. Thus within a short span of 2 years, the people of Arunachal Pradesh were called upon to elect a new Assembly. Interestingly, the “politics of defection” had made inroads into the tribal state of Arunachal Pradesh even when most people were not politically conscious and were illiterate.

Another defection after the general elections in 1998, there was an inner-party revolt leading to the expulsion of five of his ministers. One of the expelled Ministers, Mukut Mithi, split and formed the Arunachal Congress (M) which 40 members of the Legislative Assembly supported. Subsequently, AC (M) merged with Congress (I) ahead of the 1999 elections and formed a Congress (I) government headed by Mukut Mithi.

The Congress (I) government in Arunachal Pradesh led by Mukut Mithi was reduced to the minority on July 27, 2003, when 34 legislators quit the party to join hands with former Chief Minister Gegong Apang and floated a new political platform, the United Democratic Front. The UDF formed the government with Apang as chief minister, and UDF remained a coalition partner

of the National Democratic Alliance at the center. Later, Chief Minister Gegong Apang joined the BJP, thus making Arunachal Pradesh the first state in the northeast to be ruled by the saffron party. According to Apang, he joined the BJP as he wanted his party to be not merely a coalition partner, and he would make an effort to bring the region into the national mainstream. Gegong Apang sailed through the 2004 parliamentary elections as the BJP chief minister. The Party won both parliamentary seats. When the United Progressive Alliance government replaced the NDA government at the centre, and when Arunachal Pradesh was getting into Assembly election mode political colour of the state again took a sudden u-turn. The Congress readmitted Chief Minister Gegong Apang and other members of the BJP into the party.

Parliamentary elections process

With the promulgation of the North-East Areas (Re-organization) Act, 1971, the Union territory of Arunachal Pradesh was provided with one seat in the Rajya Sabha seat and another in Lok Sabha to be filled by the nomination of the President of India. In practical terms, the President of India was nominated based on the Pradesh Council's recommendation regarding Rajya Sabha. On the other hand, the nomination of a member of Lok Sabha was based on the recommendation by an electoral college consisting of all the Zila Parishads.

The first-ever Lok Sabha election was held in Arunachal Pradesh in the year 1977, where for the first time people of Arunachal enjoyed franchise rights. Indian National Congress was the only political party that put up candidates for parliamentary constituencies, and other candidates contested as Independent candidates. The union territory was divided into two parliamentary constituencies; (1) Arunachal West and (2) Arunachal East. The west Arunachal Parliamentary constituency consisted of 17 Assembly segments covering the Kameng and Subansiri districts and some parts of the Siang district. The Arunachal East parliamentary constituency comprised 13 Assembly segments which covered parts of Siang and two other districts of Lohit and Tirap. The Indian National Congress candidate R.K. Khrimy was the lone candidate from the 1-west Arunachal Parliamentary constituency and hence was elected uncontested. In Arunachal East, there was a triangular contest between Congress candidate Shri Nyodek Yongam, Two Independent candidates, Shri Bakin Pertin and Aken Lego. Bakin Pertin, an Independent candidate, was elected to the Parliament as the first ever popularly elected Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh.

In 1980 simultaneous state Assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections were held. This election was held after a gap of one brief year of presidential rule was imposed in 1979. The seven Lok Sabha elections marked the ousting of the Janata Government under Moraji Desai from the central. In Arunachal, Both the Indian National Congress candidates emerged victorious Shri Sobeng Tayeng and Prema Khandu Thungon from Arunachal East and Arunachal West got elected, respectively. For the first time, the People's Party of Arunachal contested for Lok Sabha seats in 1980. Though the party could not win the elections, it gave a tough fight to the mighty Congress party in the state. Both the PPA candidates Shri Bakin Pertin and Kuru Hassang from Arunachal East and Arunachal West, respectively, secured the second positions in the election.

In eight Lok Sabha elections, the Indian National Congress candidate P.K. Thungon and Wangpha Lowang from the Arunachal West and Arunachal East, respectively, got elected in the 1984 parliamentary elections. The election witnessed many

independent candidates contesting, especially in Arunachal East constituency. PPA again become the second-largest party by securing second place in both parliamentary seats. Arunachal West candidate PPA Tomo Riba lost the election by 461 votes only.

The ninth Lok Sabha election was held in 1989. It was the first Lok Sabha election after Arunachal Pradesh became a full-fledged state in 1987. Both the INC candidates got elected in the election Shri Laeta Umbrey and P.K. Thungon from Arunachal East and Arunachal West respectively became Member of Parliament. For, more than a decade only INC and PPA had been dominant in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh. The parliamentary election as seen in the above table was primarily a fight between these two parties along with a few independent candidates. Congress had a dominant party winning electorally in every election. With the formation of the Janata Dal government at the central in 1989 by replacing the Congress (I) government the dominance of INC in the politics of India came to a standstill.

Due to the central political turmoil, India's election commission declared a mid-term poll in Lok Sabha in 1991. People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) merged with the Janata Dal after the formation of the Janata Dal government in New Delhi in 1989. Once again, P.K. Thungon and Laeta Umbrey were fielded as official candidates in both parliamentary constituencies.

The 11th Lok Sabha election in Arunachal Pradesh was held in 1996. The election was fought amidst the uproar of the vexed issue of Chakma and Hajong refugee issues. The INC official candidates P.K. Thungon and Laeta Umbrey were defeated due to the political difference within the party and lost their respective seats to Independent candidates. It has been alleged that Gegong Apang, who had an unfriendly equation with the Congress high command, has supported the independent candidates.

The Janata government's collapse at the central 12th Lok Sabha election was held on 16th February 1998. The 1998 election took place after the formation of the Arunachal Congress, the second and the only existing regional political party in the state. Arunachal Congress candidates in both parliamentary constituencies were elected for the first time in the electoral history of Arunachal Pradesh. In the 1-West parliamentary constituency, Omak Apang, a young leader and son of Gegong Apang, successfully contested against veteran politicians like Tomo Riba.

After one year after the dissolution of BJP led NDA government, the central 13th general election to the Lok Sabha election was held on September 1999. The Lok Sabha election in the state of Arunachal Pradesh was marked by the return of Congress (I) to the state's Political arena. The Congress fielded Jarbom Gamblin in the western parliamentary constituency and Wangcha Rajkumar in the eastern parliamentary constituency. In the western parliamentary constituency Jarbom Gamblin, the INC candidate defeated his nearest rival, Omak Apang.

Many political parties and candidates contested in the parliamentary election in 2004. However, the contest was mainly between Congress and Arunachal Congress in the Western parliamentary constituency and the Eastern Parliamentary constituency between Congress and BJP. It was for the first time in the Electoral history of Arunachal Pradesh that the BJP opened its account by winning both parliamentary seats in the 2004 parliamentary elections.

In the 2009 election maximum number of contestants so far in Arunachal parliamentary election in each constituency. In the western Arunachal constituency, the contest was between Indian National Congress and Arunachal Congress, whereas in Eastern

Arunachal Constituency was between INC and BJP. Congress wrested both seats from the BJP. In the 2014 parliamentary election both BJP and Congress draw one seat each, BJP won the western parliamentary constituency with Kiren Rijiju as the BJP candidate whereas in the western constituency, BJP candidates lost to Congress candidates. In the 2019 parliamentary election BJP candidates, Kiren Rijiju and Tapir Gao in both were declared winners of western and Eastern Arunachal parliamentary constituencies.

CONCLUSION

The electoral history in Arunachal Pradesh has unique from what we see in other parts of India. Despite the celebration and euphoria over the people's participation increase and the democratic setup strengthening in the state, many things remain to be done to enhance the credibility of democratization in the real sense. First and foremost, the state lacks a competitive party system in elections; the ruling party has the advantage of winning the state Assembly or Parliamentary election. Therefore, we can conclude state is least affected by real ideological battles, but ruling syndrome exists in state politics. Arunachal politics has continued to become the most volatile as defection and switching party loyalty has been a regular phenomenon in state politics from Tamo Riba to the most recent Kalikho Pul episode in 2016 is still fresh in our mind. On the other hand, all sixty Assembly and two parliamentary seats had similarities and dissimilarities. The similarity in the determinant of election, like the ruling party, has all the advantage of winning the election only in rare occasions ruling dispensation lost the seats. The role of Money can be seen in the candidates who contested the election are affluent people. Dissimilar in some constituencies like three constituencies in Tawang district, the role of theocratic leader is significant, and districts like Tirap, Changlang, and Loding, where the role of the underground outfit is visible in many Assembly and Parliamentary elections.

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