

**AN ANALYSIS OF CHARISMATIC PERSONALITIES OF POLITICAL LEADERS  
AND ITS REFLECTION ON THE RESULTS OF ASSAM ELECTIONS-2014-2021**

**Dr. Jhuma Das**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Gogamukh College,  
Dhemaji, Assam- 787034 (Affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam)

**Abstract:**

Charismatic leadership is defined by a leader who uses his or her communication skills, persuasiveness and charm to influence others. Charismatic leaders, given their ability to connect with people on a deep level, are especially valuable within organizations that are facing a crisis or are struggling to move forward. The General Election results of India are directly and indirectly gets the reflection of different charismatic personality of political leaders started from Jawaharlal Nehru to Narendra Modi till today. Similarly, in the regional level the election results are highly dominated by the charismatic personality of leaders. In Assam, too we can see the reflection of charismatic personalities like Gopinath Bordoloi to Himanta Biswa Sarma, who put their charismatic charms through different techniques to motivate the voters. This paper will try to analyze the reflection of charismatic personality on the Assam election results from 2014-2021. It will also try to focus on the different advantages and disadvantages of such reflections on election results for the people of Assam.

**Keywords:** Charismatic Leadership, Political Leaders, Reflection, Results, Assam Elections.

**Introduction:**

Charisma is the term commonly used in the sociological and political science literature to describe leaders who by force of their personal abilities are capable of having profound and extraordinary effects on followers. These effects include commanding loyalty and devotion to the leader without hesitation or question or regard to one's self interest. The term charisma, whose initial meaning was 'gift', is usually reserved for leaders who by their influence are able to cause followers to accomplish outstanding influence. Frequently such leaders represent a break with the established order and through their leadership major social and political changes are accomplished. In the current literature the term 'charismatic leadership' is generally defined and described in terms of the effects of the leader on followers or in terms of the relationship between leaders and followers (House, Robert, J 1976). We can see the impact of charismatic leadership on Indian politics and voters since the First General Elections. Nehru was regarded as the hero of the Indian society. Indira Gandhi was regarded as the mother of masses and Rajiv Gandhi was known as symbol of peace. Former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, one of India's most charismatic leader who led the nation through several crisis and held together a

tenuous coalition with his inclusive nature of politics ([www.rstv.nic.in](http://www.rstv.nic.in)). Gopinath Bordoloi was a charismatic leader in Assam with sterling qualities of head and heart, who served as the first Chief Minister of Assam. He is also known as liberator of Assam from further division ([www.eparlib.nic.in](http://www.eparlib.nic.in)). A father figure to many politicians of Assam, veteran Congress leader Tarun Gogoi is considered to be one of the tallest political figures of the state and a visionary and a statesman, under who's leadership Assam progressed a lot, particularly at a time when militancy was still going strong (Sentinel Digital Desk, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2020). The political scenario of India and Assam was changed after the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections. The Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP) and the charismatic leadership of Narendra Modi rode an anti-Congress wave and returned to power after 10 years and become the first non-Congress party to get absolute majority in the Lok Sabha and the first to do so in national elections after 30 years. It was Modi's popularity that helped BJP to win on its own in the Assam Assembly Elections in June, 2016. BJP slogan of 'Paribartan' (change) in Assam from Congress dominated era to BJP era ([www.livemint.com](http://www.livemint.com)). Prime Minister Narendra Modi has weaved his electoral magic in 2019 Lok Sabha Election and winning a bigger majority for the BJP compared to 2014 polls ([www.indiatoday.in](http://www.indiatoday.in)). Himanta Biswa Sarma is one of the most charismatic and dynamic leaders of Assam. He is a great visionary and is at times referred to as the Chanakya of Assam and Northeast politics. Sarma had served three terms as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Assam as a Congress politician. But he joined the BJP in 2015 following the differences with the then Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. In the 2016 Assam Assembly Elections, the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and once again in the 2021 Assam Assembly elections, he managed to create electrifying atmosphere during the poll campaign. He is known as huge crowd puller. On 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, the Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Sing Tomar, announced the name of Himanta Biswa Sarma as the legislative party leader and the next Chief Minister of Assam (the Sentinel Digital Desk, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2021).

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Charismatic leadership is certainly a dynamic and empowering form of leadership and combined with other styles of leadership, it creates a powerful force that gives people the enthusiasm and self – management to achieve great results. When a leader with charisma becomes so strong and confident that they can dominate their teams to the extent that others simply never question their decisions. Blind followers who are loyal to their charismatic leader will almost certainly lead to poor decision – making and even allow for unethical behaviour by the leader. The dark side of charisma emerges when three key factors are absent – a strong ethical culture, inclusion of diverse perspectives and heeding the voice of followers. The charismatic leadership sometimes turns into autocratic character of the leaders and they never bother to take any decision which indulges them into corruption and dictatorship.

The results of Assam elections are never free from the impact of charismatic leadership. The result of 2014 elections in Assam was based on Modi magic on the basis of slogan of "Paribartan" (change). BJP has put up its solid entry in Northeast India with its different

promises like return back of 'Black Money', complete updating of National Register of Citizens (NRC), eradication of corruption, supply of electricity for twenty four hours in villages and towns, complete digitalization, land rights to the landless citizens, flood control and some others. But still there is no return of 'Black Money', the NRC update is still have many doubts and issues, many landless citizens have no permanent lands yet, villages and towns are still suffering from severe electricity crisis, and floods are creating disaster for many villages and towns of Assam. Yet, still we can see the impact of charismatic leadership on the results of 2019 Lok Sabha Elections, 2016 State Assembly Elections and the present 2021 State Assembly Elections. The BJP continued to score victory with the help of Modi 'magic' and the lofty ideas dynamic personality of the regional leader Himanta Biswa Sarma work out as blessings for the BJP in Assam.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- This study will try to analyze the reflection of charismatic personality of leadership on the Assam Election results from 2014 to 2021.
- This study will try to explain the different advantages of the charismatic leadership for the people of Assam.
- This study will try to highlight the different disadvantages of the charismatic leadership for the people of Assam.

### **Review of Literature:**

House, Robert, J (1976), has described about the term 'charismatic leadership' and also about the influence of them. Singh, Bikas (2014), described about the 2014 Lok Sabha Election results and the massive win of BJP in Assam. Pande, Shamni (2014), discussed the strategy and tactics behind the creation of Brand Modi. Shantanu, Shashank (2016), has highlighted about Assam Assembly Election results and most important reasons responsible behind the victory of BJP. Biswas, Joydeep (2016), has described about the BJP's emphatic victory in Assam was, among other things, scripted by a complex social engineering whereby Assamese regionalism, ethnic assertion and Hindutva could be rallied successfully against the perception of a Muslim demographic invasion. Shina, Sagarneel (2019), has discussed, why BJP could win Assam in 2019's Lok Sabha polls. Ahmed, Hilal, Sharma, Dhruva, Pratim and Tripathi, Vikas (2019), has explained how did the NDA managed to mobilize all social groups, except Muslims, in its favour to win the elections. Deka, Kaushik (2021), has analyzed how the BJP returned to power in Assam through its stable leadership.

Singh, Khogen, k (2021) has discussed about the BJP's strategy of upgrading of national highways and construction of roads. Deepalakshmi, K (2016), has described the BJP government's hits and misses after completing two years term from 2014-2016. Deka, Kaushik (2019), has described the reasons behind the protest of the Assamese people against the

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Pandey, Chandra, Munish (2019), has tried to focus on the worst violent protests in Assam by the public in its history after the government passed the CAA.

### **Research Methodology:**

This study has used analytical method to analyze the reflection of charismatic leadership on the election results of Assam from 2014 to 2021. It also follows explanatory method to find out the different advantages and disadvantages of the charismatic leadership for the people of Assam. Different books, articles, journals, newspaper articles and websites are referred for data collection.

### **Discussion and Analysis:**

#### **The Reflection of Charismatic Leadership on the Election Results of Assam from 2014 to 2021:**

##### **Lok Sabha Elections, 2014:**

The Lok Sabha election results in 2014 has made the Modi wave swept across the country, the BJP made gains in the most unexpected of places. In the Northeast, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) made huge in roads in a region that has always been recognized as a Congress Fortress. Out of 24 Lok Sabha seats in the region, the NDA has won 10 seats. In its best performance ever, the NDA has nudged out the congress in Assam, winning half the 14 seats against Congress tally of three. As the BJP made its in roads, 2014 proved to be the worst year for the Congress in Assam. (Bikash Singh, The Economic Times, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2014).

In his 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign, Modi had raised the issue of “illegal migration” very strongly and perceptibly, his promise to chase out illegal migrants paid rich dividend. It is still a very emotive issue for a majority of Hindus in Assam. The BJP has gained on this issue because the Congress and the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) are largely considered two parties that are willing to appease illegal migrants. The updating of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) by the Central government, really helped the BJP politically, though a section of Assamese Hindus are not in favour of giving citizenship to the Bengali Hindu immigrants (Devendra Kumar, 15<sup>th</sup> march, 2016, retrieved from [www.t-com.cdn.ampproject.org](http://www.t-com.cdn.ampproject.org)). The BP leader Narendra Modi’s election juggernaut in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls is an example of how to prepare and successfully implement a marketing and blending campaign. Irrespective of your faith, ideology and voting decision, there has been no escaping Modi. His image and in-your-face messaging have overshadowed all others- even that of his own party. The impact of his relentless campaigning has been felt across different age groups, geographies and sections of society. The reference of the development model of Gujrat by Modi also works excellently to attract voters of Assam ( Shamni Pande, Case Study, Business Today, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2014).

**State Assembly Elections, 2016:**

In the State Assembly Elections, 2016, BJP and its alliance partners have won an absolute majority in Assam. It has won 60 seats on its own in the 126 member House. Its ally Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) has won 14 seats while another ally Bodo People's Front (BPF) has bagged 12 seats. Ruling Congress has bagged 26 seats only, AIUDF 13 and one seat has gone to an independent. BJP's Chief Ministerial candidate Sarbananda Sonowal has won from Majuli seat, defeating his nearest rival by more than 18,000 votes. This thumping win of BJP in Northeast India can be seen as its entry in the Northeastern part of India or expanding political influence beyond its traditional heartland. The interesting fact of the results is that the party managed to break into Congress stronghold (<https://www.jagranjosh.com>).

Unlike Bihar and Delhi, where BJP fought the Assembly elections on PM Narendra Modi's 'face value', the saffron party think tank gave more importance to the local leadership. Months before dates for Assam Assembly polls were announced, the BJP named Sarbananda Sonowal as its Chief Ministerial candidate. Tarun Gogoi's once most trusted lieutenant, Himanta Biswa Sarma, walked away from Congress in August, 2015. Sarma was in Congress for nearly 23 years but he fell away with Gogoi after his differences with him on some internal issues of the party. BJP played a masterstroke by promising the 'respect' Sarma expected from the Congress for being a loyal worker of the party over two decades. The masterstrokes and different points of weaknesses of the Congress Party narrated by Himanta Biswa Sarma worked a lot in favour of BJP. Many analysts describe him as 'kingmaker' of the party. The BJP released its vision document for Assam Assembly Elections in March, a month before polls in the Northeastern State. Naming the document 'BJP Assam Vision Document 2016-2025', the party promised to deliver on sensitive issues like foreign nationals and porous border with Bangladesh. BJP made its local leaders focus on the issue of construction of fence along the 4,000 km long border with Bangladesh during campaigning. It also assured the people that a law would be enacted to "deal sternly" with industries, businesses, small and medium enterprises or any other agencies employing infiltrators (Shashank Shantanu, Assam Assembly Results, India Today, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2016). The urgently needed at that moment was a loud and clear message to the Assamese middle class that the BJP was very much with the Assamese regional nationalism, a force which has dominated the State's politics in the post-colonial period. The entire campaign language was craftily drafted in such a manner so that the resulting sharp religious polarization could push Congress into a cul-de-sac. The battle of Saraighat of 1671 was used as an allegory to foment the theory of Muslim Invasion. Assembly Elections 2016 were named as the "Last Battle of Saraighat" so that the indigenous Assamese and tribal could be pitted against the 'invaders' (Muslim settlers) for electoral vengeance (Joydeep Biswas, A Victory on Social Engineering, The Hindu, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016).

### **Lok Sabha Elections, 2019:**

The BJP has surpassed its 2014 tally in Assam, securing 9 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats, even as its allies, the AGP and BPF drew a blank in the state. Despite widespread opposition against the BJP for pushing the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the run-up to the three-phase polls, the party has been able to retain Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Gauhati, Lakhimpur, Mangaldoi and Tezpur besides bagging Autonomous District (ST), Silchar and Karimganj. Assam's Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had posted pictures of "euphoric" celebrations outside state BJP headquarters via Twitter ( Lok Sabha Election Results 2019, Business Line, The Hindu, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2019).

To win politics, one needs both mathematics and chemistry- and it seems that both these factors are favouring the BJP in Assam, where the saffron party is trying to polarize the tribal plus Assamese votes by invoking NRC and Clause 6 and Hindu Bengali's by the Citizenship Bill. The ongoing resentment over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 is posing a challenge to the BJP's target of winning more than 12 seats. There is a wide perception in political circles that the BJP will not be able to repeat its 2014 performance and it may even end up losing the seats it won previously. But the election results shows the different picture for us (Sagarneel Shina, Why BJP could Win Assam in 2019's Lok Sabha Polls, retrieved from [www.dailyo.in](http://www.dailyo.in)). Most Assamese Hindus were opposed to the Bill and yet a majority of them voted for the BJP alliance. In a socially diverse state that had undergone decades of ethnic conflict and insurgency, religious polarization cutting across ethnic cleavages presents an interesting case. The party's success lay in its ability to neutralize the opposition to the Bill and divert the attention of Hindus towards the increase in Muslim population, presumably due to influx from Bangladesh with Congress patronage (Hilal Ahmed, Dhruva Pratim Sharma and Vikas Tripathi, BJP's Polarization Strategy Hits the Mark in Assam, The Hindu, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2019). The Completion of the construction of the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge and its inauguration by PM Narendra Modi on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2017, which is India's longest river bridge. It will connect Assam and eastern Arunachal Pradesh. The bridge reduced the travel time between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh from six hours to just one hour as the distance will shrink by 165km. It facilitates numerous hydro power projects coming up in the state. The bridge will make it much easier for Army Convoys to reach outposts near the China border. The bridge definitely helps to increase industrial investments with better border trade between Northeast and South Asian countries (All you need to know about Dhola-Sadiya Bridge, The Hindu Net Desk, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2017). PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the Bogibeel Bridge in Assam on 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, on the birth anniversary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Bogibeel bridge connects the south bank of the Brahmaputra river in Assam's Dibrugarh to Silapathar in Dhemaji bordering Arunachal Pradesh. The 4.9km-long bridge on the Brahmaputra river boasts of being Asia's second longest rail-cum-road bridge. The bridge will reduce the distance to Northeast region by 165km, saving fuel worth Rs 10 lakh per day in the region. These two heavy weight structures helped BJP also to win the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections ([www.livemint.com](http://www.livemint.com)).

### **State Assembly Elections, 2021:**

The Bharatiya Janata Party and its regional allies retained power in Assam, staving off the challenge of a 10-party grand alliance led by the Congress and a new regional front sired by the 2019 protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The 2021 Assam Legislative Assembly elections witnessed a thrilling finish with the ruling BJP-led NDA retaining its grip in the state by bagging 74 of the 126 Assembly constituencies that went to polls, while the opposition Congress-led Grand Alliance managed to clinch just 50 seats. The saffron party alone won 60 constituencies, the same as in 2016, while its alliance partners, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) got 9 seats and the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) secured 6 seats ([www.inida.com](http://www.inida.com)).

A large section of people in Assam- particularly Assamese speaking population were angry with the BJP leadership over the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019. In fact, two new regional political parties- Assam Jaitya Parishad (AJP) and Rajior Dal were born out of the agitation against the CAA. There was a strong chance that the BJP and AGP may lose the support of the Assamese-speaking people, who formed their core vote base, particularly in Upper Assam. What added to the BJP's worry was the formation of a grand alliance of eight parties to consolidate anti-BJP votes. In a state with a Muslim population of 40 percent, the coming together of the Congress and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) under this umbrella alliance had the potential to cause massive damage to the BJP by consolidating Muslim votes, which usually go against the saffron party. Despite this demographic advantage, the Congress led alliance could not put up a serious challenge to the ruling alliance. The performance and politics of Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam's minister for finance, health, education and PWD has a reputation for being a politician who delivers on his promises. He also earned massive public support for his efficient management of the covid crisis in the state. His unmatched popularity, his state-wide campaign and road shows attracted huge crowds. In fact, many people voted for the BJP in the name of Sarma. Sarma projected AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal, who is perceived to be protecting the interest of illegal Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh, as the biggest threat to Assamese identity and able to convince voters that only the BJP could protect them from it. The massive support of women voters swung the results in the BJP's favour. The game changer was the Arunodoi scheme for women which provided Rs 830 to eligible households every month. The BJP promised to increase the amount to Rs 3,000 per month. More importantly, Sarma, in rallies after rallies, promised to waive off all the microfinance loans taken by women in the state. Despite their internal differences, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Sarma worked in tandem to provide a stable leadership in the state. The BJP's drive against corruption, particularly in government recruitments, earned the party massive goodwill. The promise to provide 1 Lakh employment for the unemployed youths really attracts the attention of youths. The improvement of road infrastructure gave the people a sense of development. A strong, stable leadership, fractured opposition and massive support from women voters helped the saffron party

hold on to the state (Kaushik Deka, How the BJP Returned to Power in Assam? India Today, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2021).

### **Advantages of the Charismatic Leadership for the People of Assam:**

Charismatic leaders are also known as visionaries. They have big dreams and they work hard towards making those happen. They look beyond the big picture to see what others are unable to see beyond the horizon. These leaders are also excellent communicators. There is an element of belief that Charismatic leaders must inspire in others to begin making progress toward their goals ([www.futureofworking.com](http://www.futureofworking.com)). From the period of 2014-2021, we can see the serious impact of Charismatic leadership on the election results of Assam. The mission and vision of Charismatic leadership in Assam has been successful to achieve some milestones for the benefit of the people. If upgrading of national highways and construction of roads in the rural belts of Assam could win an election, then the ruling BJP should race to power. While rural roads are being metalled and the national highways are being four-laned. The construction of Dhola-Sadiya bridge and the Bogibeel bridge are the two examples, which really shows the development of infrastructure facilities for the people of Assam and all over India (K. Khogen Singh, Thumbs up for Delivering Development in Assam, The New Indian Express, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2021). The LPG subsidy reforms were beneficial for the rural area people. In the year 2016, initially started as a 'Give it Up' campaign, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry, headed by Dharmendra Pradhan barred LPG subsidy to customers who earn more than Rs 10 lakh per annum. The amount save was used to give over five lakh new LPG connections to those who still use fire woods or kerosene stoves for cooking (K. Deepalakshmi, Two Years of Modi Government: A Review, The Hindu, 25<sup>th</sup> march, 2017). In January, 2021, PM Modi gave 1,06,000 land certificates and addressed a large gathering at Jerenga Pathar in Sivsagar, Assam, a historic site where Joymoti, an Ahom princess, had sacrificed her life in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Till date, over 3.28 lakh families in Assam have received "land pattas" and thanks to the Modi Government's incessant efforts. PM Modi's decision to extend the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) for nine months during the Covid pandemic benefitted Assam and its people in a big way. Over 58 lakh families, which is around 2 crore and 5 lakh individuals, in Assam, reaped the benefits of the extension, with each individual getting 5kg of rice and each family getting 1kg of pulses per month. Roughly 1.25 lakhs tones of rice and 5,795 tones of gram were distributed by the Modi government every month in Assam, till the scheme persisted. Assam also got additional Rs 2,236 crore from the centre. Under the government of Sarbananda Sonowal, work on six new medical colleges has already been initiated. Besides the AIIMS in Guwahati, Biswanath and Charaideo medical colleges will cater to north and Upper Assam. Under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, with over 55 lakh people in the state having already availed of primary health treatment in the Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) that have been established in Assam. Nearly 40% population of the state has benefitted from Ayushman Bharat and 1.5 lakh people have received free treatment already. Thirty five lakh women have received gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, with 4 lakh of the aforesaid families in Assam belonging to the Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In Assam, under the Jal Jeevan Mission, piped water connections have been provided to 2.5 lakh homes in the last 1.5 years alone, endorsing PM Modi's mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sanka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' ([www.thedailyguardian.com](http://www.thedailyguardian.com)). Arunodoi scheme was launched in October 2020, which provides financial assistance of Rs 830 per month through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme to around 17 lakh families in the state (Assam State Portal). From the year 2018, the meritorious girl students of Assam who had secured 1<sup>st</sup> division in higher secondary examination are getting scooty from the government of Assam. More than 22,000 girl students already get benefitted from the scheme (News from DY365, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020).

### **Disadvantages of Charismatic Leadership for the People of Assam:**

Charismatic leaders are often a catalyst for social change. Charismatic leaders inspire people to work together for a common cause. But the political party under the charismatic leadership becomes a populist cult of personality instead of a group of people with shared ideals or values. People might focus more on charisma instead of efficiency, organization and the work itself. The followers of the charismatic leaders might get addicted to charisma of their leaders and consider them as granted for any decisions. On many occasions charismatic leaders asked to follow them for their cause that served their own selfish purpose. The value of democracy gets degraded under the hands of charismatic leadership because these leaders are ready to suppress the democratic voices when it hurts towards their charisma ([www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com)). In Assam, the charismatic leadership of PM Modi and its regional party leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma wages several benefits for the local people. But we cannot overlook the different adverse effects of this charismatic leadership on different grounds. Assam is the only state in the country where the NRC updation has been undertaken since 1951 under the supervision of the Supreme Court. The NRC is touted as the proof of Assamese identity and it is hoped that it will filter illegal foreign nationals, an issue that has affected the state for decades. The BJP promised in its election manifesto, the complete updation of NRC for the people of Assam. BJP President Amit Shah had batted aggressively for implementing NRC not only in Assam but throughout the country to identify illegal immigrants. The first draft of NRC was published on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2018 in Assam under the ministry of Sarbananda Sonowal. But after becoming the Union Home Minister in the Narendra Modi-II government, Amit Shah has not publicly spoken on the issue yet. Instead the union ministry declared in a statement that the inclusion of a person's name in the final NRC list does not by itself amount to him or her being declared a foreigner. It also assured that adequate arrangements have been made for appeal against it. At a high-level meeting chaired by Shah and attended by CM of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal, the ministry had decided to amend the rules to increase the time limit of filing of appeals in Foreigners Tribunals from 60 days to 120 days for those whose names do not figure in the NRC (NRC and the Changing Stand of Political Parties in Assam, The New Indian Express, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2019). The final draft on NRC was released on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, within tight security with over 2.89 crore names out of the total 3.29 crore applicants in Assam. Many citizens of Assam are even excluded

from the list. The opponent political parties and student's organizations and local bodies are not at all satisfied with the final draft related to the inclusion and exclusion. The inclusion and exclusion issues related to the NRC final draft created lots of confusion and invites lot of criticism from general people of Assam. Still the final settlement of the disputed issues is pending. The BJP government introduced the Citizenship Amendment Bill in Parliament on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019. The Bill aims to provide Indian citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. A person belonging to any of faiths, who entered India on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014 for having faced religious persecution, in those three countries can apply for Indian citizenship. If the person can prove religious persecution, he or she will be granted citizenship by the government of India. The people of Northeast have strongly opposed this Bill. Though the Bill covers refugees from three nations, the people in the Northeast fear that it will primarily benefit the illegal Bengali Hindu migrants from Bangladesh who have settled in large numbers across the region. It is an established fact that a large number of illegal immigrants, both Muslims and Hindus, entered the Northeast, primarily Assam. This Bill is being seen as an attempt to legalize these illegal Hindu immigrants. The Assamese fear that if Bengali-speaking illegal immigrants are granted citizenship, these immigrants may outnumber the locals, as it has happened in Tripura where Bengali-Hindu immigrants from East Bengal now dominate political power, pushing the original tribal's to margins (Kaushik Deka, Why Assam is Protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Bill, India Today, 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019). The people of Assam are constantly protesting against CAB. The Rajya Sabha on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 passed the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, with as many as 125 MPs voting in favour of it and 99 against it, after the constant opposition by the citizens of Assam ([www.business-standard.com](http://www.business-standard.com)). Assam was witnessing one of the worst violent protests by the public in its history after the government passed the Citizenship Amendment Act. The state erupted in uncontrolled protests, in which agitators engaged in pitch battle in almost every major city or town, forcing the administration to impose a curfew. At least 4 people died in police firing, 175 arrested and more than 1400 people detained (Munish Chanda Pandey, Assam CAA Protest, India Today, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2019). In Assam still the towns and villages are facing severe electricity crisis. The process of digitalization possessed by the BJP government is constantly get halted due to the severe electricity crisis facing by the rural areas of Assam. The charismatic leadership of the BJP government has failed to keep its promise of providing constant electricity in different parts of Assam. Still the people of Assam face the effects of disasters of floods in different parts of Assam. In 2020, while entire India is battling the constant increase in covid19 cases, heavy rainfall joined hands in doubling the challenge by wreaking havoc in some of the states. Assam is one such state where situation is worsening every day. The rainfall that began on July has flooded the Brahmaputra, which in turn inundated around 26 districts thereby affecting more than 27.8 lakh people all across the state. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), more than 90 people have lost their lives due to the flood and landslides. The flood has also submerged almost the entire of the Kaziranga National Park. The promise of

charismatic leadership of the BJP government could not minimize the flood related problems for many people in Assam ([www.timesnonews.com](http://www.timesnonews.com)).

### **Conclusion:**

Charismatic leadership has all kinds of impacts on the voting behaviour of the citizens and election results of Assam. From 2014-2021, we have witnessed many direct and indirect powerful reflections of charismatic leaders on the election results of Assam. The powerful entry of BJP and Narendra Modi by winning 2014, Lok Sabha elections in Northeastern states including Assam was one of the reflection of 'Modi Wave' and the agenda of BJP based on 'Paribartan' (Change). The charismatic rallies of Narendra Modi and the promise of solution of the issue of "illegal migration" and the complete updation of "NRC" really helps to attract the voters of Assam. The construction of two milestone infrastructures- 'Dhola Sadiya Bridge' and the 'Bogibeel Bridge' and the formulation of new schemes like 'Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana' (food scheme), 'Ayushman Bharat Yojana' (health scheme), 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' (LPG scheme) really benefited the party to attract the voters from the rural and even urban areas. The regional charismatic leaders of BJP in Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal and especially Himanta Biswa Sarma who left the Congress Party in 2015 and joined BJP, worked very hard in Assam for the success of the party. The game changer- Himanta Biswa Sarma with his lofty ideas and charismatic leadership can bring voters very close to the party. But the failure of BJP government in the complete updation and error free NRC process and especially the imposition of CAA after the several objections and vehement protest by the people of Assam have raised several doubts on the success of the party in the 2021 Assembly Elections. But the charisma of leadership and magical ideas of party leaders especially Himanta Biswa Sarma and his popular schemes like 'Arunodoi' (for women), scooty scheme for meritorious girl students in H.S. final year, his promise to provide 1 lakh jobs for the unemployed youths of Assam and waiving of Micro-Finance loans have been overshadowed the anger of many people of Assam regarding the imposition of CAA and to caste vote in favour of the party. So, we can say that charismatic leaders with their long visionary ideas, powerful and popular personality can change the worst situation of the party. The effect of the charismatic leadership also depends on the judgment of efficiency, organization and work by the people itself of the different regions.

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