

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES :
A CASE STUDY OF TWO RESERVED ASSEMBLY
CONSTITUENCIES IN U. P. 1977-1991**

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DECLARATION

Certified that the thesis entitled, "Political Participation of Scheduled Castes: A Case Study of Two Reserved Assembly Constituencies in U.P. 1977-1991 submitted by Subedar Singh Arya for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University. This is his work and this has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Dedicated
to my respected
elder brother
Late Shri Ram Prasad*

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ABBREVIATION

BAMCEF	: Backward and Minority Community Employees Federation
BJP	: Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	: Bharatiya Jan Sangh
BKD	: Bharatiya Kranti Dal
BLD	: Bharatiya Lok Dal
BSP	: Bahuja Samaj Party
CPI	: Communist Party of India
CPM	: Communist Party (Marxist)
DMKP	: Dalit Mazdoor Kishan Party
D-S ₄	: Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti
INC	: Indian Nation Congress
IND	: Independent
JNP	: Janata Party
JNP(S)	: Janata Party (Secular)
OBC	: Other Backward Class
PSP	: Praja Socialist Party
RPI	: Republican Party of India
SJP	: Samajvadi Janata Party
SSP	: Sanyukta Socialist Party
SC	: Scheduled Caste
ST	: Scheduled Tribe
SWT	: Swatantra Party
U.P.	: Uttar Pradesh

PREFACE

The Scheduled Castes have been suppressed and discriminated for centuries together. They are not allowed to mingle and interact with the rest of the society. The constitution of India provides various safeguards to protect their interest and also reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the legislatures, educational institutions and Government employment. The Central and State Governments have spent several crores of rupees for the upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. But we do not notice any significant change or improvement in the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Even today these sections are living under abject poverty.

The present study is an attempt to analyse the participation of Scheduled Castes in the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh which includes their level of participation and role in the politics of Jalesar and Agra West reserved Assembly Constituencies. This study covers the five election periods from 1977 to 1991. The Jalesar Assembly Constituency is predominantly a rural assembly segment in Etah district, while Agra West is an urban assembly segment in Agra city of Uttar Pradesh. The area for study has been selected by keeping in view the changes in the nature of politics in Jalesar and Agra. The Jalesar assembly

constituency was a stronghold of ruling Congress Party. The Jatavs Congress party, who constituted a very powerful section dominated the local politics since independence. However since 1977 the Jatavs faced serious challenges from other sections of the Scheduled Castes. The Jatavs were replaced by other castes like, Nut, Agaria and Dhobi etc. On the other hand, Agra West assembly segment elected representatives of opposition parties like RPI and BKD, when it was a general seat before 1974. After the declaration of Agra West as a reserved assembly constituency, the political power was captured by the Congress Party till 1985. The political power in Agra West Assembly constituency has always been in the hands of one dominant Scheduled Caste, Jatav. The other minority Scheduled Castes like Kori, Balmiki, Khatik, Dhobi, etc. are neglected by all the political parties.

The study is aimed at investigating the reserved assembly constituencies as an electoral institution, the role of different political parties, caste and groups, the performance of Scheduled Caste leaders and their dependence on upper castes, inter party and caste based factionalism and the level of political consciousness of the Scheduled Castes etc. It has also been tried, to find how political parties select the Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved constituencies. Beside these, the role of BSP in Jalesar and

Agra region is also under the purview of the study.. It is in the light of the above that I have made an attempt to explore the political consciousness and development of the Scheduled Castes in these reserved assembly constituencies.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM:

The Scheduled Castes have remained socially, economically and politically backward since the very beginning of the caste stratification in India. The state in Independent era introduced constitutional measures to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It also formulated policies for the overall upliftment of their living conditions. Despite all these constitutional and legislative measures, the improvement in the condition of these downtrodden sections of our Indian society is significantly minimal. Steps taken by the governments, whether it be Central or State, to integrate the Scheduled Castes into the mainstream appear to be impressive only in principle and policy level. It is a well known fact that the Scheduled Castes still carry the stigma of being 'untouchables', performing all menial jobs.

The constitution provides for reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha as a protective measure to ensure adequate representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to the legislative bodies. These provisions were adopted for a limited period but always extended from time to time. However, even after forty five years of independence the Scheduled Castes continue to suffer due to various social evils and economic disparities that exist in our societal structure. The Scheduled Castes are not in

a position to stand at par with the ruling elites, mainly constituted of the upper castes.

The level of consciousness among the Scheduled Castes about the existing disparities in rural areas is very low compared to that of the urban areas. In rural areas, since politics is dominated by the influential groups formed by the upper castes, the Scheduled Castes are often prevented from freely exercising their franchise; they are not allowed to vote in favour of the candidates of their choice. They are often physically coerced and made to support candidates chosen by the ruling elites and the upper castes.

The rights of the Scheduled Castes are adversely affected because of the domination of higher castes and their vested interests in the local politics. In reserved constituencies, the Scheduled Caste voters are wooed by several unconstitutional and extra-constitutional mechanisms in order to perpetuate the upper caste interests. This political blackmail is possible by the upper castes on account of poverty and ignorance prevailing among these poor Scheduled Caste citizens.

The representatives and political leaders of the Scheduled Caste are highly dependent on upper caste politicians in reserved constituencies as they are the ones who hold the key to success. Thus, the agenda of local

MLA or MP is largely guided by upper caste ruling elites. The Scheduled Caste representatives merely act as puppets or pawns in the hands of the upper castes on whom their political survival rests.

With the emergence of democratic political process in India that provided structural institutions like reservation of the constituencies for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In a democratic system, electoral process plays a vital role in the acquisition of political power. In Indian electoral system there are two kinds of constituencies. One is the general and the other reserved. In the general one, any adult citizen can contest the election for the Assembly or the Lok Sabha whereas in the reserved constituency, only the Scheduled Castes or the Tribes can contest. In the reserved constituencies, the Scheduled Caste candidates are not required to compete with other castes, though there is competition within these castes.

The lack of competition with other castes has led to factional divides among the Scheduled Castes themselves. Factionalism and the sub-caste rivalries have gripped the minds of the Scheduled Caste politicians. But, had there been competition with the upper castes, the Scheduled Castes would have got united against these castes, and the quality of the leadership of the Scheduled Castes would have improved. Instead, because of the reservation, the upper

castes have got united and opposed the policy of reservation several times, resulting in increased incidents of atrocities on the weaker sections in several parts of our country. Thus, the mere reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes is no longer an effective device to safeguard their interests.

In the elections covering a period of almost a quarter of a century (1962 to 1985) the ruling party, i.e., the Congress had cornered most of the reserved seats, both in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections (see tables 1.1 and 1.2). The only exception was during 1977 when the Janata party dislodged the Congress in the country in general and U.P. in particular. It is obvious that the Scheduled Caste candidates can win the elections only when they are sponsored by dominant political parties. They invariably lose the poll whenever they contested independently or without the support of any one of the major political parties.

While making a special provision for the Scheduled Castes and the Tribes it was assumed that the special electoral system was necessary for bringing the Scheduled Castes and Tribes into the national mainstream. But it is clear from the tables 1.1 and 1.2, that this special electoral system has been one of the vital instruments for the dominant political parties to capture political power. Therefore, it is on this ground that the assessment of the provision for reserved constituencies becomes important.

TABLE 1.1

PARTY POSITION IN RESERVED CONSTITUENCIES OF LOK SABHA IN U.P., (1962-1984)

(In per cent)

Name of Political Party	No. of Seats											
	1962	Percentage	1967	Percentage	1971	Percentage	1977	Percentage	1980	Percentage	1984	Percentage
INC	14	77.78	15	83.33	18	100	-	-	8	44.44	18	100
BJS	1	5.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PSP	1	5.56	1	5.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RPI	1	5.56	1	5.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SSP	-	-	1	5.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JNP	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	100	-	-	-	-
JNP(S)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	50.00	-	-
IND	4	5.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.56	-	-
Total	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	18	100

Source : V.B. Singh, Shankar Bose, State Elections in India: Data Handbook on Lok Sabha Elections 1952-85 (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1986), pp.318-759.

Name of Political Party	No. of Seats													
	1962	Per-centage	1967	Per-centage	1969	Per-centage	1974	Per-centage	1977	Per-centage	1980	Per-centage	1985	Per-centage
JNP(S)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10.37	-	-
INC(U)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.09	-	-
BJP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3.26	2	2.17
BKD	-	-	-	-	22	24.72	23	25.84	-	-	-	-	-	-
LKD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	14.14
IND	4	4.49	2	2.25	1	1.12	-	-	1	1.12	1	1.09	2	2.17
Total	89	100	89	100	89	100	89	100	89	100	92	100	92	100

Source : V.B. Singh, Shankar Bose, State Elections in India: Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections 1952-85 vol.,4, The North (Part II) Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988), pp.334-705.

The constitutional provision for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes is extended to the government jobs and educational institutions as well. The reservation was pursued by the government for the past four decades. Time has come now to critically examine the reservation policy, and to see whether it should continue or not. Should it be abolished? Can social justice and democracy survive in India under the existing circumstances without steps of positive discrimination? These questions have often been raised and hotly debated in recent times.

A number of scholars have attempted to study and answer the above questions. They have tried to analyse the impact of reservation policy on the Scheduled Castes, throwing light on several dimensions of their life. However, the observations of these scholars focus its attention mostly on the issues of reservation in education and employment. But the scope of the present study lies mainly in studying the political reservation for the Scheduled Castes.

Overview of Literature:

Ghanshyam Shah¹ in his study analyses the political awareness and behaviour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. After analysing the role of Scheduled Castes and

1. Ghanshyam Shah, Politics of Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Bombay: Vora and Co. Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1975).

Scheduled Tribes in 1971 Gujarat Lok Sabha election, he concludes that, during the last two decades, the political participation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has increased considerably. In some of the primary political activities like voting and involvement in politics their participation is as much as that of the upper castes. In the campaign activities they participate actively. But their participation decreases in the activities which involve complex procedures or which require serious initiative on the part of the actors.² The leaders with high socio-economic status are found politically more active than those with low socio-economic status. The study reveals that the representatives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes depend on the upper caste leaders of the party for guidance, though the latter do not treat them as equals. The upper caste leaders do not share political discussion with Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe leaders. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe leaders are unhappy with the performance of political parties and they find themselves ineffective in their functioning and he concludes that the political parties have failed in lessening the gap between deprived communities and upper castes at the level of political participation.

2. Ibid., p.158.

Padmini Narayanan³ in her study finds that the present system of political reservation benefits only the Scheduled Caste elites and not the Scheduled Caste masses. She argues that the Scheduled Caste leaders in reserved constituencies are dependent on the political parties to get elected from the reserved seats. The Scheduled Caste representatives do not take care of the interests of the Scheduled Caste masses but they are more committed to their party ideology, and they are more lenient to upper caste interests as they represent both Scheduled Castes and upper castes in their constituencies. Finally, she concluded that the Scheduled Caste representatives are in a better position to represent Scheduled Caste interests, but as it exists today this present system has not worked in their favour.⁴ Thus, Narayanan analyses the merits and demerits of political reservation. She says that the performance of Scheduled Caste legislators in parliament is poor compared to that of the non-Scheduled Caste representatives. Though the Scheduled Caste representatives participate more actively in raising questions related to the interests of Scheduled Castes, they ignore the debate on various other bills, budget constitutional amendments and problems of national

3. Padmini R. Narayanan, "Reservation in Politics and the Scheduled Caste Elite", in V.P. Shah, B.C. Agrawal (ed.), Reservation: Policy, Programmes and Issues (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1986).

4. Ibid., p.85.

importance by which they can influence the decision making process that would indirectly benefit the Scheduled Caste masses.

Barbara Joshi⁵ has analysed the role of Scheduled Caste legislators in her study. She argues that the political reservation has proved important particularly in providing the support and backing for the developmental programme for the social and economic upliftment of the Scheduled Castes in the face of stiff opposition and organised political violence as a reaction to the upward mobility of the Scheduled Castes. Her study shows that the political reservation has made the Scheduled Caste legislators assertive on issues concerning the socio-economic upliftment of the Scheduled Caste masses. She believes that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes could secure access to political activities because of the reservation of seats for these communities. Joshi also emphasises the contextual mobility of the Scheduled Castes through political reservation. She cites an example of a Scheduled Caste young man who says about Jagjivan Ram that, "I don't know his caste and I don't like his politics, but I know he is a Scheduled Caste person like me and I am happy to see him on top of Government".⁶

5. Barbara R. Joshi, Democracy in Search of Equality: Untouchable Politics and Indian Social Change (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1982).

6. Ibid., p.68.

She highlights the important fact that the existence of reserved constituencies itself means no political party can completely ignore the Scheduled Castes. Joshi says that the reserved seats are a sizeable bloc in the parliament and state assemblies. The seats will invariably be filled by Scheduled Caste representatives of one party or the other, and each party is wary of letting all these seats go to another party.⁷

She is of the opinion that the introduction of reserved constituency could draw the attention of the higher caste politicians towards the people of Scheduled Caste. These higher caste politicians consider the Scheduled Castes as a potential factor in the struggle for acquiring political power. She says that the reserved seats are also a potential factor in the factional politics of the ruling party. She argues that in order to consolidate the factions within the ruling party there is a competition among the different factional groups to muster the support of the Scheduled Caste representatives within the ruling party.⁸ In this competition she feels that the Scheduled Caste politicians are benefited through getting the party ticket and funds for election campaign.

7. Ibid., p.22.

8. Ibid., p.75.

However, Joshi, on the one hand, projects a better picture about political reservation, and on the other, she tries to show in her study that the provision for reserved seats is not enough for the Scheduled Castes to reduce their political dependence on the higher castes. She concludes that relatively low educational and economic status of the Scheduled Castes as a whole do leave Scheduled Caste legislators in hardships. She argues that while the institution of reserved constituency can reduce the political problems of the Scheduled Castes, this does not, at the same time, completely compensate for them.

She finally concludes that the gap in political skill and knowledge which forms part of the legacy of the past has not been eliminated from among the Scheduled Castes. A persistent relative shortage of skilled leadership and skillful political lieutenants contributes to the frequent dependence of the Scheduled Caste representatives on higher caste politicians⁹. Thus, Joshi's cost benefit analysis of the political reservation seems to be balanced.

Lelah Dushkin¹⁰, in her study on political reservation of the Scheduled Castes, has taken this phenomenon as a

9. Ibid., p.65.

10. Lelah Dushkin, "Scheduled Caste Politics" in J.M. Mahar's (ed.), The Untouchables in Contemporary India (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1972).

unique one. Dushkin concludes that while the provision of political reservation caters to the needs of the Scheduled Castes, it has been simultaneously much more useful for the political parties, especially the Congress Party, to retain political power.

There is another study done by Satish Saberwal¹¹ on the reserved assembly constituency candidates and consequences in Punjab. He finds that the Scheduled Caste leaders have relatively limited political resources and political socialisation. Therefore, the net result of this adverse condition is that the Scheduled Caste leaders refrain from adopting a stable political stance and depend on the patronage given by persons and the Constitution.

Saberwal points out that none of the Scheduled Caste leaders understand the institutional mechanisms which underlie and renew the current inequalities, nor do they have any stamina or spirit to devote themselves to the task of changing the larger system so that a process to initiate effective social, political and economic equality would begin.¹²

11. Satish Saberwal, "The Reserved Constituency: Candidates and Consequences", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.7, No.2, 1972, pp.71-80.

12. Ibid., p.79.

He has examined the increasing inequality of the Scheduled Caste legislators over the past years. He says that even as patronage brokers, the local representatives do contribute to the development and mobility of the Scheduled Castes, not by generating new social philosophy, but by assuming the Scheduled Caste constituents. The same political mediatory benefits are available to others in the society.

Saberwal concludes in his study that without political reservation, the access of the Scheduled Castes to various elite settings in the political arena would decline. This would make greater inequalities in the society. Thus it is clear from his study that though because of political reservation Scheduled Caste leaders are not inspired to grasp the larger institutional mechanisms which underlie inequalities at the same time the provision for the reserved constituencies is indispensable for a better political participation of the Scheduled Castes.

Owen Lynch's¹³ study on the Jatavs of Agra shows that in modern times, political participation is an instrument to rise up in the social hierarchy. He feels that political participation is a functional alternative to the modern

13. Owen M. Lynch, The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1969).

sanskritization made which means simply adopting the brahminical way of life for an upward change in social position.

Marc Galanter¹⁴ has made an assessment of the policy of protective discrimination with special reference to the reserved seats in legislatures. He believes that political reservation ensures the presence of Scheduled Caste representatives in the legislature so that they can properly understand and solve the problems of their community and distribute patronage to their groups.¹⁵ He also claims that mobilization along caste lines may have a positive impact on narrowing down the traditional caste divides and also contributes to a higher level of political participation.¹⁶

Galanter's trust in the Scheduled Caste politicians is difficult to understand, given his own awareness of the possibility of these representatives being manipulated. He himself refers to Paul Brass and G. Narayana in order to illustrate the fact that reserved seats produce non-militant leaders, dependent on the upper strata of their community.

14. Marc Galanter, "Compensatory Discrimination in Political Representation: A Preliminary Assessment of India's Thirty Year Experience with Reserved Seats in Legislatures", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.XIV, no.7 and 8 (Annual number), 1979, pp.437-454.

15. Ibid., pp.445-46.

16. Ibid., pp.449-50.

He also mentions the fact that at the end of his life, Dr. Ambedkar finally called for the abolition of the reserved seats precisely for these reasons.¹⁷ Nevertheless, these observations do not change Galanter's conviction that reservation can generate leaders who can champion the cause of their deprived caste.

The above mentioned studies have thus made a common point which, by and large, throws light on the cost and benefits, merits and demerits, involved in the political reservation of the Scheduled Castes. These studies have made an attempt to analyse the role of the Scheduled Caste legislators in the political system dominated by the higher caste politicians. These studies conclude that the Scheduled Caste representatives play an important role in the politics of the higher castes and as such they can not improve the poor life conditions of the Scheduled Caste communities with the help of reservation alone.

Objectives:

The scope of our study is entirely different from the earlier studies undertaken by a number of scholars in this field. This study aims at investigating the reserved constituency as an electoral institution, role of political parties, castes and groups in such constituencies, performance of Scheduled Caste politicians and their

17. Ibid., p.446.

dependence on political parties and higher castes, inter-party and inter-caste factionalism. It has also been tried to find out how political parties select the Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved constituencies. Finally the study evaluates the impact of political reservation for Scheduled Castes in Agra West and Jalesar constituencies - how far Scheduled Castes after four decades political reservation have been able to come near or to participator politics. We have chosen Jalesar and Agra West reserved legislative assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh for our case study. Both these constituencies were selected for the present study, because:

- (a) Jalesar is a rural reserved assembly constituency while Agra West is distinctly urban. So, it is possible to bring out the contrast.
- (b) There has been a constant change in the electoral politics of Jalesar. As this is a constituency of the Scheduled Castes the divide is between the different groups within the Scheduled Castes. So, it happens that power does not remain concentrated in the hands of a particular group or caste. If the leader belongs to a particular group in one election, he may be replaced by some one from another group in the next election. On the contrary, in Agra West, the power remained in the hands of a particular caste, Jatavs, classified as

Scheduled Caste. The other sub-castes of Scheduled Castes could not acquire the political power. It is interesting to study these phenomena.

- (c) Though both the constituencies are reserved for the Scheduled Castes, the politics of Jalesar, in real terms is played by the non-Scheduled Castes, while in Agra West the politics is dominated by the Jatavs.

Thus, the study which includes two reserved assembly segments—one each from rural and urban, will be helpful for us to understand the pattern of political mobilisation, role of political parties and the emerging leadership of Scheduled Castes in two clearly distinct constituencies.

Sampling

The investigations for the study have been conducted in Agra West and Jalesar reserved assembly constituencies of U.P. We studied, the level of political participation of Scheduled Castes in the political processes during the Assembly elections covering a period of 1977 to 1991. Three hundred and twenty voters were interviewed with the help of a questionnaire schedule.

In Jalesar, the voters were illiterate, semi-literate; some could reach high school; most of them were landless agricultural labourers, and some of them performed their

traditional occupations. In Agra West, the voters were literate-high school, intermediate or degree holders. Few of them were running their own small shoe factories. Most of the voters were, shoe makers, labourers and some were doing other traditional occupations. Some of the respondents were employed in private or public sector enterprises.

We have also interviewed over one hundred leaders including MPs, MLAs, former MPS, MLAS, political activists, Municipal Corporation members, Municipal Town Area Chairman, Block Pramukh and Gram Panchayat Pradhan, etc.

Data Collection

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the Census of India, Census of Uttar Pradesh, Agra and Etah District Census Handbook, District Statistical Diary of Agra and Etah, District Gazetteer of Agra and Etah, Election Commission Reports, Commissioner's Reports on Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Commission Reports of Scheduled Castes and Tribes etc. The secondary sources include books, articles, journals and newspaper reports.

Methods

Interview schedule was prepared and administered among the Scheduled Caste voters in Jalesar and Agra West reserved assembly constituencies. 160 Scheduled Caste voters from ten

villages¹⁸ in Jalesar assembly constituency were interviewed. Among the Scheduled Caste voters of Jalesar, five Scheduled Castes were covered. These were Jatav, Dhobi, Balmiki, Nut and Agaria. In Agra West, various mohallas¹⁹ were covered. The voters of Jatav, Dhobi, Balmiki, Kori and Khatik^o castes were interviewed. The data was also collected through open ended interview with political leaders and activists who are operating at different political levels in Jalesar and Agra West reserved assembly constituencies.

Chapterisation

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The earlier works on the politics of reservation and election did not take into account the historical background of political reservation and the provision for reserved constituencies in India. The present study attempts to deal with these questions in the second chapter. Besides dealing with the origin of political reservation, an attempt is also made to examine critically the nature of political reservation and its impact on the Scheduled Castes.

In the third chapter an attempt is made to analyse the impact of political parties and local political forces upon

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18. These villages, viz: Bara Bondela, Jinaowli, Missouli, Narholi, Poundari, Pilkhatra, Punehra, Rohina, Mirzapur, Shaknagar Timerua, Shakroli.
19. These Mohallas viz. Bhogipura, Jagdishpura, Nagla Prathvinath, Prakash Nagar, Ram Nagar, Kedar Nagar, Nagla Chhaua, Naubasta, Rui ki Mandi, ,Lohamandi, Bodala, et

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the administrative integration of the reserved constituency. We have also analysed that how does the electoral alternation get influenced by the practice of delimitation and the intentional reservation of a particular constituency. Moreover, we have tried to find out that how political forces practise the electoral abuses like delimitation and selection of reserved constituency.

In the fourth chapter we have discussed the socio-economic background of Jalesar and Agra West reserved assembly constituencies of Uttar Pradesh. This chapter also deals with the political backgrounds of these assembly constituencies. As the socio-economic condition of a particular constituency plays a vital role in shaping its politics, this is also dealt with.

In the fifth chapter an attempt is made to analyse the political mobilization among the Scheduled Castes, especially the Jatavs of Agra in 1960s, focussing on voting pattern of the Scheduled Castes, selection of the Scheduled Caste candidates for the electoral contest, intra- caste/group factionalism among the Jatavs as well as the inter sub-caste rivalries within the Scheduled Castes.

The sixth chapter deals with political processes in Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. An attempt is made to analyse the process of the selection of Scheduled Caste candidates, voting pattern of Scheduled Castes, the factors

determining the electoral outcome and the reasons behind the success or failure of a Scheduled Caste candidate in the election.

In the Seventh chapter a comparative study is made on the political process of Jalesar and Agra West reserved assembly constituencies. We have traced the political development of Scheduled Castes in general and Jalesar and Agra West in particular. The emergence of Bahujan Samaj Party and its role in Uttar Pradesh as well as in Agra and Jalesar specifically is also dealt with in this chapter. The last chapter deals with the major findings of this research.

CHAPTER II

**ORIGIN AND IMPLICATION OF
RESERVATION POLICY IN INDIA:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

Scheduled Castes constitute 15.75 per cent of India's population.¹ They are dispersed throughout the country, occupying the lowest ranks in the caste hierarchy. The Scheduled Castes, by and large, are landless agricultural labourers. Discriminated for centuries they were condemned to perform the most difficult and dirtiest jobs, subjected to a wide range of disabilities and segregated from rest of society. Higher caste people avoid contact with the Scheduled Castes because the latter were considered to be ritually unclean by birth and as such potential polluters for the twice-born. Their touch, and in some instances even their mere sight was considered to be contaminating.

The Scheduled Castes are not allowed to enter the houses of caste Hindus, except for certain necessary purposes like scavenging. They are not allowed to draw water from the wells of caste Hindus. In South India, the Scheduled Castes live in separate villages, while in the North, they live in the outskirts in complete isolation. The stigma of untouchability keeps them alienated from other fellow human beings.

With the aim of breaking the structure of social and economic disabilities to which a sizeable section of the population had been tied down for centuries through the

1. Census of India, 1981.

tradition and practice of untouchability in Hindu society, the constitution of India abolished untouchability and declared its practice an offence punishable by law. Constitutional guarantees were also made for protective discrimination in favour of the Scheduled Castes, was envisaged as a step to bring about the amelioration and eventual integration of these deprived sections of Indian society with rest of the people.

Origin of the Reservation Policy

The age old segregation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes resulted in their socio-economic backwardness and the lack of representation in the legislature and administration. The reservation includes various forms of safeguards, protections, claims, advantages, benefits, concessions, guarantees, weightages etc. to the depressed classes. These measures in one form or other have been introduced since late nineteenth century.

Chatrapati Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur had granted scholarships and established special boarding houses for the Scheduled Caste students. Madras Government in 1885 had framed grants-in-aid code to regulate financial aid to educational institutions providing special facilities to students of depressed classes. The policy of reservations was also introduced by many Maharajas of erstwhile princely states. Among the princely states, Mysore recognised the

problem very early and in 1895, orders were issued for reservation of posts for all communities except Brahmins.² The governments of Travancore and Cochin followed suit. The undivided Bombay and the unrecognised Southern States were the first to recognise the claims for representation of backward classes in the public services.³

The Government of India Act 1909, known as Minto-Morley reforms Act, introduced separate electorates for the Muslims. The 'Lucknow Pact' of 1916 between the Congress and Muslim League, accepting separate electorate for the Muslims was strongly resented by the Congress leaders like Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya.⁴ The British used the 1909 Constitutional Reform Act for sowing the seeds of communalism between the Hindus and Muslims in North India.

The Government of India Act of 1919 to provide political reservation to the non-Brahmin castes in Maharashtra and Madras and this Act is the basis of reservation for the depressed classes in the post-independent India. In 1918, the Maharaja of Mysore appointed a Committee under

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2. Report of Backward Classes Commissioner, Vol.I, 1953-55 (New Delhi: Government of India), p.130.
 3. Ibid., Vol.I, pp.130-31.
 4. Rajni Kothari, Politics in India (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1970), p.66.

chairmanship of L.C. Miller to recommend steps for adequate representation of non-Brahmins in the state services. Accordingly, in 1921, facilities of education and recruitment in state services were introduced for the depressed communities. In 1921, Madras Government took several steps for higher representation of non-Brahmins in government services. This scheme was reviewed in 1927 and the scope of reservation was enhanced further. In 1928, Bombay Government had appointed O.H.B. Sarte Committee to identify depressed classes and recommended special provisions for their advancement.

At the all India level, the provision for nomination of depressed class members to Legislative Councils came up with the Montague-Chemsford reforms of 1919. In the political field, as distinguished from the educational and services area, the untouchables began to receive benefits of representation on the public bodies. The Franchise Committee recognised the claims of depressed classes and favoured the system of nomination instead of election as the most expedient and practical method of political representation. The Government of India Act 1919 contained provision, for restricted Franchise based on property holdings or educational qualifications. This in effect, deprived the untouchables of their right to vote. The situation did not change till the formation of the Constituent Assembly.

Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi on Reservation:

After 1919, there was an organised and persistent attempt from the side of Dr. Ambedkar to secure political reservation for the untouchables at all India level. The era of emancipation of untouchables began with the rise of Dr. Ambedkar. Before the South Brough Committee Dr. Ambedkar argued that a community might claim representation only on the account of separate interests which require protection.⁵ The untouchable classes must have their own men in the council hall to fight for the redressal of their grievances.

The issue of political representation for depressed classes cannot be understood without being aware of the controversy between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar with regard to the type of representation to be granted. It was, in fact, Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for guaranteed representation that had dragged Gandhi into the issue, and Gandhi never saw any solution to the problems of the untouchables in terms of political safeguards. It is because of this, Gandhi who rejected separate electorate did not propose any alternative to guarantee political reservation for these sections. In one of his letters Dr. Ambedkar had also pointed out this. He said that the leadership of depressed classes who supported Gandhi did not understand that Gandhi was opposed not only to

5. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Writings and Speeches, Vol.II, p.537.

the idea of "separate electorate" but also to the special representation for depressed classes.⁶

Both Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar remained at loggerheads throughout the period, this could be partly explained by their differences in understanding the problems of caste system and untouchability as well as of their differences in the style of leading the movement for the cause of depressed classes. As Eleanor Zelliot has rightly pointed out, the leadership of the majority and minority groups represented, in simplistic terms, idealistic Hindu traditionalism and western-influenced modernism respectively.⁷

The moderating influence of Gandhi on the nationalist movement had serious repercussions on his anti-untouchability campaign. While preaching the social upliftment of the untouchables, Gandhi did not take into account their economic status in the countryside. The vast majority of the agricultural labourers came from the untouchables and lower castes but nothing was offered to ameliorate their economic conditions.⁸ Since Gandhi refused

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6. Dhananjay Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1962), p.181.
 7. Eleanor Zelliot, "Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar: A Study in Leadership" in J.M. Mahar (ed.), The Untouchables in Contemporary India, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1972), p.70.
 8. K. Kumar, 'peasants' perception of Gandhi and his programme: Oudh 1920-1922", Social Scientist (II), February 2, 1983, p.27.

to condone an attack on the prevailing social order, he urged them to work for their betterment by maintaining friendly relations with their superiors.

Despite these doubts, on the effectiveness of Gandhi's strategy, one cannot ignore the fact that his condemnation of untouchability was complete and that he spread an awareness about the problem among the larger population. He always declared that it was idle to talk about Swaraj as long as Hindus did not give up their own discriminatory practices. Gandhi set a personal example by mixing with the untouchables and breaking the taboos against scavenging. He proclaimed that "I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born as an untouchable, so that I may share sorrows, sufferings and the affronts leveled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition".⁹

Gandhi's insistence that untouchables should accept their economic status in society and the service through physical labour show his lack of awareness of the material conditions which had given rise to caste discrimination. He attributed the observance of untouchability to bad character and called it a sin against Hinduism. Gandhi used this concept of sin in appealing to the guilt feeling of caste Hindus to alter their behaviour towards those whom they had

9. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, (19), p.573.

subjected to untold sufferings for centuries. His main weapon in weaning away orthodox Hindus from their bigotry was his re-interpretation of the Hindu scriptures which, according to him, did not warrant a belief in a fifth varna. This position was acceptable even to such an orthodox Hindu leader like B.G. Tilak who remarked, in 1918, that "It is a sin against God to say that a person is untouchable, who is not so to God Himself...Hinduism absorbed the Shudras, can it not also absorb the untouchables".¹⁰

Different from Gandhi on many counts, Dr. Ambedkar believed that the problems faced by the untouchables could not be solved by reforms within the caste system. The complete annihilation of the caste system is the only way out, he thought. He was under no illusion that such a development could take place on a voluntary basis. That was why he advocated an active role for both the untouchables and government in bringing about structural changes in society.

Dr. Ambedkar had genuine doubts on the sincerity of Congress and Gandhi. He called constructive programme of the Congress a 'shabby deal' considering the pittance that the Congress actually spent for the amelioration of the conditions of the untouchables. Gandhi's style of functioning had further strengthened his doubts about the

10. Quoted in Eleanor Zelliot, op.cit, (1972), p.73.

former's sincerity; he accused Gandhi of political expediency.¹¹

Dr. Ambedkar's disagreement with Gandhi reached a climax in the early 1930s after the Britishers with the intention of splitting the National Movement awarded to untouchables separate electorates. thus, the Britishers supported Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who advocated an independent mobilisation of untouchables to protect their interests. Gandhi on the other hand argued that separate electorate will be harmful to the untouchables since it would perpetuate their stigma while it provided neither penance nor any remedy.

Right at the beginning of the Round Table Conference hosted by the British Government, Gandhi declared his opposition for any kind of special political safeguards for the depressed classes as it would mean recognition of these sections as a separate political entity. Hence, Gandhi's main concern was to keep Hinduism united inspite of the various social evils inherent in it. For him, removal of social evils meant attainment of Swaraj, and the British Government was the greatest of all social evils with which our society was cursed.¹² Gandhi's opposition to separate

11. B.R. Ambedkar, What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables, (Bombay: Thacker & co., 1945).

12. Dhananjay Keer, Mahatma Gandhi: Political Saint and Unarmed Prophet (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1973), p.357.

political reservation for the depressed classes originates from his worry that this would split and weaken the nationalist movement. If Gandhi had accepted whatever the depressed classes representative had demanded from the British, the problem could have been solved very easily. A ready acceptance by the Congress leader would have removed any suspicion of the depressed classes about the true intentions of the Congress leadership. However, it seems, for Gandhi, the question was not that of weakening or strengthening of the national movement, but it was one of retaining the Scheduled Castes as integral part of Hinduism in their traditionally sanctioned position, with equality of status among all other groups.

Dr. Ambedkar's idea of separate electorate came up only in the first Round Table Conference. Before his departure to London for attending this, he made it clear in his address to the All India Depressed Classes Conference in August 1930 at Nagpur, that he would be in favour of joint electorates for untouchables.¹³ But in the Conference, when the Congress claimed its monopoly of representing every shades of Indian opinion and refused to participate in the Conference, Dr. Ambedkar abandoned his earlier opposition to separate electorates. His Demand for safeguards in the future

13. Eleanor Zelliot, "Learning the use of Political means: The Mahars of Maharashtra in Rajni Kothari (ed.), Caste in Indian Politics, (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1970), p.46.

Constitution included separate electorate recruitment to government services, law against discrimination and special department to look after the depressed classes.¹⁴

At the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931, Gandhiji refused Dr. Ambedkar's claim to represent the untouchables and claimed in turn that he himself represented the masses of untouchables. Gandhi opposed separate electorates for the untouchables, though grudgingly, he conceded the same to Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Anglo-Indians.

The 'Communal Award', announced on 16th August 1932, following the Second Round Table Conference (1931), gave the untouchables a double vote - one in a special constituency for a modest number of reserved seats and another one in the general electorate. The Congress, Gandhi and Patel in particular, opposed the Communal Award. As the depressed classes population formed one fifth of the total Hindu population in 1911, for Gandhi and Congress, it was essential to keep Hindu society united. Gandhi felt that separate electorate would result in splitting Hindu society vertically and obstruct the process of assimilation of untouchables into the mainstream of Hinduism. He felt that the untouchables could progress only within the framework of Hinduism.

14. Eleanor Zelliot, op.cit., (1972), p.84.

The pace with which the new political consciousness grew among the depressed classes especially after the constitutional reforms of 1919 the Congress leadership became afraid of a possible erosion of its mass base among the Hindu depressed classes. It was feared that the separate electorates would promote group interests and no concern for the Congress programme.

Sardar Patel took the Communal Award as a conspiracy of Britishers to rule through a handful of untouchables. Special representation to the untouchables, he thought, would keep the other Hindus out of the legislatures. And Gandhi foresaw a greater political danger, a threat to the unity of the Indians in their struggle against colonial rule.¹⁵ But, more than this, what frightened Gandhi's move was his fear of a possible disintegration of Hinduism. While writing to British Prime Minister MacDonald in September 1932, Gandhi expressed that the double vote would neither protect the interests of the depressed classes nor the Hindu society from being disrupted. In the establishment of separate electorate for the depressed classes he saw only the injection of poison that is calculated to destroy Hinduism and nothing good whatsoever in the interest of the depressed classes.¹⁶

15. History of Harijan Sewak Sangh (1932-1968), (New Delhi, 1971), pp.38-39.

16. Ambedkar on Poona Pact: Collection of speeches, writings and document, (Jallundhar, 1973), p. 54.

But these developments have forced the Congress to include social reforms in its programmes. Prior to 1932, the Congress did not speak forcefully on the socio-economic problems of the depressed classes although, in 1917 in its Karachi session, it adopted various social reform programmes in general.¹⁷

The Poona Pact:

Gandhi went on an indefinite hunger strike, in protest against the separate electorate, in Yeravada jail at Poona. Gandhi's fast had created commotion in the Congress circles and among the people. Gandhi's fear was as their separate electorate would create division among Hindus so much that it would lead to bloodshed. He even thought that the hooligans among the untouchables would make common cause with Muslim hooligans and kill caste-Hindus.¹⁸

For Dr. Ambedkar, the problem was different. He resented the quantum of representation provided for the depressed classes through the 1932 Award. He had asked for 180 seats (16.36%) out of the thousand under the terms of Communal Award.¹⁹ The Communal Award provided the right to

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17. Marc Galanter, Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.26-27.
18. Eleanor Zellot, Op.Cit., 1972, p.85.
19. Fronteria Richard "Gandhi and Poona Pact", Political Science Review, Vol.1, (6) 1967, p.16.

vote for the eligible depressed class voters along with the rest of caste Hindus in the general constituencies, and also an extra vote for a period of twenty years in special Depressed Class constituencies. Under the communal award, 78 constituencies were reserved for Depressed classes. These separate constituencies were allotted in all the provinces except Sindh, North-West Frontier and Punjab.

The British Government declined to alter the Award without the consent of Dr. Ambedkar as he was legitimately taken as the representative of the depressed classes. Gandhi's fast unto death was to force the British Government to alter the communal award. Seizing the opportunity, Dr. Ambedkar decided to bargain with Congress. After twenty one days of Gandhi's fast, Dr. Ambedkar relinquished the separate electorates in return for a system of reserved seats with joint or general electorate. The terms of Poona Pact signed between Dr. Ambedkar and the Hindu leaders in September, 1932 were accepted by the British government enabling Gandhiji to terminate his fast on 26th September, 1932. The Poona Pact provided that a total of 148 seats shall be reserved for depressed classes out of the general seats in provincial legislatures.

The pact provided that elections to these seats shall be by a joint electorate. The Pact also held that this reservation would remain for a period of ten years unless

terminated earlier by mutual agreement. The Poona Pact further laid down that every endeavour should be made to secure fair representation of the depressed classes in election to local bodies and in appointment to public services, subject to the educational qualifications.

The compromise formula under the Pact had increased the strength of the seats double fold, and this was regarded by Dr. Ambedkar as a handsome profit of the political transaction. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the loss to the depressed classes under the Pact was the system of double vote' which the 1932 Award had guaranteed to the depressed classes. Dr. Ambedkar felt that double vote was valuable to the depressed classes as it would have given them a say in general election as well as in electing their special representatives. This was, however, lost in the Pact which replaced separate electorate with the system of joint electorate with reserved seats.²⁰

Gandhi, was completely opposed to reservation of seats. To a statutory reservation of seats, he preferred a scheme which would give the Hindu community a chance to voluntarily send adequate number of representatives from depressed classes to the legislatures.

As regards, as Dr. Ambedkar had commented on the political implications of the Poona Pact, the Pact took

20. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Op.Cit.

away from the depressed classes a priceless privilege and a powerful political weapon. The double voting in his opinion, would have made the caste Hindu candidates more dependent on the votes of the 'untouchables' and no caste Hindu candidate would have dared to neglect them. Gandhi's fast unto death also wrestled political initiative from the hands of the Harijan leadership.

As a result of the Poona Pact the leadership of the Scheduled Castes which had for the first time come unto their hands again went back to the higher castes, who continued to dominate the politics even after the attainment of Swaraj. It is strange that the depressed classes could not play a significant role in influencing the decision making process in the post independence period as they did under the leadership of Babasaheb during the colonial period.

Constituent Assembly Debates

In the Constituent Assembly, various streams and shades of thought on the reservation issue came for debate. Jawaharlal Nehru moved a resolution in the Constituent Assembly in one of its December 1946 sittings which sought reservation for the depressed classes.²¹

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar submitted a memorandum on behalf of depressed classes in the Constituent Assembly,

21. Constituent Assembly Debates Vol.I, p.59.

demanding constitutional safeguards for them.²² He suggested that the political safeguard should ensure that the Scheduled Castes should have atleast a minimum representation in the legislatures according to the population ratio. He proposed that the representatives should be elected through separate electorate on the basis of adult franchise based on cumulative voting system. It is significant to the principle of proportionate representation that Dr. Ambedkar suggested way back in 1940s has now become an important issue of debate and demand. Jagjivan Ram a prominent leader of the Scheduled Castes had emphasised that these guarantees should be aimed at the protection of racial and religious minorities from "extinction" and assimilation.²³

Suggestions regarding the safeguards for the Scheduled Castes contained in a memorandum submitted by All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association suggested a number of measures for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and also demanded reservation in proportion to their population. It was proposed that elections in reserved constituencies should be either through separate electorate, or if the principle of joint electorate was adopted, every elected candidate should

22. Shiva Rao, The Framing of India's Constitution, Vol.II, (New Delhi, IIPA, 1967), pp. 93-96.

23. Ibid., pp.330-36.

24. Ibid., p.382.

secure as a condition at least 40 per cent of the votes polled by members of the Schedule Castes.²⁴

Emphasising the importance of the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the legislatures it was pointed out in the constituent assembly debates that representation in legislatures were of far greater importance than representation in the government services. If a community is represented in the legislature, it's representative can raise the demands for the socio-economic upliftment of their community to ensure that no injustice is done to the depressed classes.²⁵ It was suggested in the constituent assembly that apart from reservation in legislatures, reservation to the depressed classes should also be provided in local bodies, Municipalities and District Boards.²⁶

The welfare of the depressed classes had slowly become a unanimous and natural concern before the Constituent Assembly. Moving the objectives resolution on January 29, 1947, G.B. Pant said, "We find that in our country we have to take care of the depressed classes, the Scheduled Castes and backward classes. We must do whatever we can to bring them

25. Speech by Chandrika Ram, Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol.VII, 30 November 1948, p.687.

26. Speech by H.J. Kanndekar, President of the Depressed Classes League, Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol.IX, p.632.

upto the general level so that the gap is bridged. The strength of the chain is measured by the weakest link of it and so until every link is fully revitalised, we will not have a healthy body politic".²⁷ Even though the objectives contained in the resolution moved by Pant were not fully kept up with final, accepted draft of the Constitution, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes could retain their reservation. Based on the recommendations of the Sardar Vallabhai Patel the Advisory Committee suggested to the Constituent Assembly that reservation for the Sikhs, Muslims, Christians or any other religious community should be abolished and it be kept only for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. On being put to vote, all the communities offered full support to the proposal. Jawaharlal Nehru was so much moved by it that he described it as a historic turn in our destiny.²⁸

Constitutional Provision

The Draft Constitution, prepared by the drafting committee headed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was submitted to the President of Constituent Assembly on 21 February, 1948. The Draft Constitution had articles dealing with the minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.²⁹ The constitution of

27. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol.II, pp.332-333.

28. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol.III, p.330.

29. Shiva Rao, Op.Cit., pp.630-34.

India, came into force on 26th January, 1950. It provides reservations for the backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The government decided to continue the political reservation for Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The Articles 330 and 332 provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies. There are 79 and 40 seats in the Lok Sabha and 557 and 315 in the State Assemblies reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

Provision was also made for reservation of seats in Panchayats and local bodies. Apart from this Political Consignment of reservation, reservation in education and employment are also envisaged.

In order to bring the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who have been subjected to social injustice for centuries, exploitation and economic deprivation at par with the rest of the societies, the constitution of India provides that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Articles 14 (4) and 335 of the constitution ensure adequate representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in services, and the articles 15(4) and 29 provide

for reservation of seats in educational institutions. The Central Government has reserved 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent seats in the central services for Scheduled Castes and Tribes respectively. Likewise, every state has reserved special quota in jobs and in educational institutions for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and backward classes. The Table-2.1 gives

Table-2.1

Status of Reservation in State Services (in Per Cent)

State	SC	ST	OBC	Total
Andhra Pradesh	15	6	25	44
Assam	7	12	-	19
Bihar	14	10	20	44
Gujarat	7	14	10	31
Haryana	20	-	5	25
Himachal Pradesh	22.5	5	15	42.5
Jammu & Kashmir	8	-	42	50
Karnataka	15	3	40	58
Kerala	8	2	40	50
Madhya Pradesh	15	18	25	58
Maharashtra	13	7	14	34
Orissa	16	24	-	40
Punjab	14	-	1	15
Rajasthan	16	12	-	28
Tamil Nadu	16	2	50	68
Uttar Pradesh	18	2	15	35
West Bengal	15	5	-	20

- Note: 1. Reservation for OBCs does not exist in the Central Government, West Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Rajasthan, Union Territories and North East States.
2. In Madhya Pradesh the quota for OBC is not in operation because it is being withheld by the High Court.
3. Tamil Nadu figure from Mandal Commission (p.148) and Galanter.

Source: Ishwari Prasad, Reservation Action for Social Equality, (New Delhi: Criterion Publication, 1986), p.70.

the distribution of reservation quota in different States for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other backward classes.

On the social grounds also, the Constitution has provisions. The Constitution of India abolishes untouchability (Article 17) and prohibits discrimination in access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and public places. Article 338 envisages the appointment of a special officer by the President to monitor matters relating to safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution:

Practical Implications of Reservation:

Though the special constitutional provisions have gone a long way in trying to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in actual operation these provisions have had only limited, desired effects. After four decades of independence in India the vast majority of Scheduled Castes still belong to the most deprived sections of Indian society. They are still suffering from multiple forms of exploitations and injustices.

The major objective of the various provisions enshrined in the constitution providing reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is to build an egalitarian social order to replace the fragmented and hierarchical social order. The provision aims at creating socio-economic

conditions, to integrate them in the mainstream. But, it is time to ask how far this reservation, particularly political reservation, has been useful for the overall upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

It is true that, to achieve a complete social and political equality in a democratic set up, political reservation for the depressed strata is essential. But, studies have shown that political reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes engenders divisionism as well as elitism among them and creates a gulf between the various sections within the Scheduled Caste. The reservation is also responsible for the dependence of Scheduled Caste and Tribe politicians on Upper Castes as well as on the dominant political parties which are dominated by the upper caste leaders. Incidentally, the political representatives from the reserved constituencies have shown less skill in parliamentary debates and in handling issues in the legislative bodies. This may be attributed to their lack of ability and tactics to express what they feel about or fear of being mistaken as a casteist.

In spite of all these minus points, it is to be said that the political reservation, in the final analysis has helped to an extent in bringing at least a section of Scheduled Caste and Tribe leadership to the political forefront.

Let us now see the positive and negative aspects of reservations in detail:

i) Elitism and growing gulf within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes:

Reserved seats normally produce powerless leaders who join with the upper strata from whom they derive their support. Marc Galanter³⁰ and Barbara Joshi³¹ are of this opinion. Joshi observed that the reserved constituencies are dominated by higher caste people. However, political reservation is helping to build the groundwork for self-mobilization. Thus, political reservation is not leading to mass development, it only leads to elite development among the Scheduled Castes.

The emergence of middle class within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes community has blocked the developmental process. Once a Scheduled Caste person is recruited into political system, it helps him to improve his status, resulting in his total isolation from his own community. At this stage he identifies himself with the superior sections of the society. Thus, the reservation policy creates a gulf between the

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30. Marc Galanter, "Compensatory Discrimination in Political Representation: A Preliminary Assessment of India's Thirty Year Experience with Reserved Seats in Legislatures", Economic and Political Weekly, XIV, Annual No.7 & 8, February 1979, pp.437-54.
31. Barbara R. Joshi, Democracy in Search of Equality: Untouchables Politics and Indian Social Change (Delhi, Hindustan Publishing Corp., 1982).

persons benefited and those who still remain poor. This elevated economic status of the Scheduled Caste legislators is materially very much identical to the class character of the ruling elites. Thus, class character of the Scheduled Caste legislators belonging to the ruling party, is perfectly reflected in the kind of ineffective, less assertive, less articulated and indifferent role that they play in the decision making process.

Overall, one can say that Scheduled Caste and Tribe politicians are involved more in their own improvement than that of their communities.

ii) Dependence on Upper Caste Leaders:

As Ghanshyam Shah³² has observed, the Scheduled Caste and Tribe leaders depend on the upper caste leaders of their respective political parties for guidance and support. These leaders are generally used by the upper caste political leaders for strengthening their own support base.

iii) Dependence on the dominant political parties dominated by upper castes;

As Narayanan's³³ study shows, the Scheduled Caste

32. Ghanshyam Shah, Politics of Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Bombay: Vora and Co. Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1975), p.162.

33. Padmini R. Narayanan, "Reservation in politics and the Scheduled Caste elite", in V.P. Shah, B.C. Agarwal (ed.), Reservation Policy, Programmes and Issues (Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 1986).

representatives depend on the party tickets to get elected to the reserved seats. These representatives are not in a position to take care of the interests of the Scheduled Caste masses as they are bound to follow the party policy and discipline, committed to the upper caste interests.

iv) Poor Performance in the legislative bodies:

Ghanshyam Shah³⁴ says that the participation of Scheduled Caste representatives in decision making at the village, district, state, or national level is marginal. Narayanan³⁵ also finds that the commitment of the Scheduled Caste and Tribe legislators in the parliament is very poor compared to the problems and needs of the dalit masses. Saberwal³⁶ says that in Modelpur reserved Assembly constituency of Punjab there is no Scheduled Caste leader who understands the larger institutional mechanisms which underlie the renewed current inequalities. Nor is there any who have the stamina for changing the larger system so that its

34. Ghanshyam Shah, "Protective Discrimination, Equality and Political Will", in V.P. Shah, B.C. Agarwal (ed.) Ibid., p.4.

35. Padmini R. Narayanan, Op. Cit.

36. Satish Saberwal, "The Reserved Constituency: Candidates and Consequences", Economic and Political Weekly, 7(2), 1971, pp.79-80.

process would generate effective social, economic and political equality.

In general, the poor performance of Scheduled Caste and Tribe leaders with limited exceptions is an accepted fact. But, it is not possible to correlate the poor performance with political reservation. Only thing that can be arrested is that political reservation has not enhanced a better performance by the Scheduled Caste and Tribe politicians. As Joshi³⁷ has said, political reservation is not enough for the Scheduled Castes to reduce their political dependence on the higher castes. However, these problems can be solved if the higher level positions are shared with the Scheduled Castes. This can come about only when better educational and socio-economic conditions are generated for the Scheduled Castes. So that they can become equipped enough to handle these positions.

Now, about the positive aspects. Reservation has contributed to the upliftment of the people of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The pace may not be fast, and the progress may not be significant. But, as Saberwal, Joshi, Shah and Dushkin analyse, reservation in one way or other helped the dalit people, atleast a section of them, in getting their way into the rest of the society. Saberwal³⁸

37. Barbara R. Joshi, Op. Cit.

38. Satish Saberwal, Op. Cit.

thinks that without political reservation, Scheduled Castes' access to political arena, to various elite settings, would also decline. This would also make for yet greater inequalities.

Lelah Dushkin³⁹ finds that even the reservation quota in education and employment is actually filled only after exerting sustained political pressure. In this sense political reservation is essential. Joshi⁴⁰ is of the opinion that political reservation helps to resolve some of the problems of Scheduled Castes and Tribes; but, to her, this does not work as a full compensation. Political reservation is not enough to solve their problems.

This is precisely the reason behind the relative stagnation seen in the social mobility of dalits. There is no noticeable improvement in the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes. Majority of the Scheduled Castes are still suffering from socio-economic and educational backwardness. The political parties are more interested in using the reservation as an instrument to achieve their electoral aims rather than eradicating the poverty and socio-economic backwardness of these sections of population.

39. Lelah Dushkin, "Backward Class Benefits and Social Class in India, 1920-1970", Economic and Political Weekly, XIV, 14, April 7, 1979; pp.661-67.

40. Barbara R. Joshi, Op. Cit.

CHAPTER III

**POLITICS OF DELIMITATION OF
RESERVED CONSTITUENCIES**

The people of India accepted parliamentary democratic form of government, modeled on the basis of western democracies. In such a system representatives from all parts of the country are to be elected directly by the people through universal adult franchise. The makers of the Constitution kept in mind the regional, social as well as economic disparities and thought it necessary to give adequate representation to each and every section of the society. Thus, it became necessary to demarcate and delimit constituencies to facilitate due representation to all sections of the society. For this purpose a Delimitation Commission was set up, entrusted with the responsibility of demarcating as well as delimiting constituencies for the Parliament and state assemblies.

As per the constitutional provisions, the Delimitation Commission was also entrusted with the task of identifying the reserved constituencies. Initially, the double member constituencies were introduced which facilitated persons to cast two votes, one for the candidate belonging to reserved category and another for the candidate contesting from the general category. In 1961 the system of double member constituency was abolished. Exclusively reserved constituencies were carved out for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The criterion for the setting up of reserved constituencies was firstly the concentration of the population belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in different parts of the country, and secondly, that these constituencies were to be demarcated and located in such a way that the representatives elected from these reserved constituencies demonstrated a national character, representing different parts of the country and various other sub castes among the Scheduled Castes. The Delimitation Commission first reserved the constituencies where the concentration of Scheduled Castes were more than 20 per cent and identified other constituencies by the dispersal criterion to give a broad based and nationwide representation to the Scheduled Caste communities unevenly distributed all over the country.

Marc Galanter's¹ study of 76 Lok Sabha seats reserved for Scheduled Castes in 1962 elections reveals that the Scheduled Caste population was about 30 per cent in 13 constituencies and in most of the remaining constituencies it was ranging between 10 to 30 per cent and in none of the reserved constituencies their population could form a majority. A high percentage of Scheduled Caste population lives outside the reserved constituencies. Further his study

1. Marc Galanter, Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.47-48.

of the 111 Lok Sabha seats in 1961 shows that the concentration of Scheduled Caste population was more than 20 per cent of the total, and only 46 seats were reserved. Interestingly, 29 constituencies, where the population of Scheduled Castes was less than 20 per cent were reserved for Scheduled Castes. These make one read that first, there is no proportionate representation of the Scheduled Castes according to their population and secondly, seats where concentration of Scheduled Castes are found are not reserved, i.e. Scheduled Castes mostly reside outside reserved constituencies.

The constituencies were demarcated on the basis of the percentage of population in a state, not on an all India basis. And, because of this, in some states, certain constituencies with low percentage of Scheduled Caste population were reserved while in other states, some constituencies with heavy concentration of Scheduled Caste population were treated as general.

The number of assembly seats reserved in a district for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were determined by dividing the total population of the district by the population figures of state and thereby multiplying the quotient with the total number of assembly seats.² In

2. R.P. Bhalla, Elections in India 1950-52 (New Delhi: S. Chand and Co. Pvt Ltd. 1973), p.57.

allotting one reserved seat to a district the Delimitation Commission provisionally drafted the quota of the district by dividing the population of each one of these Scheduled Castes by the total population of state as a whole and then multiplying the quotient by the quota of seats to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the State.³

In the Lok Sabha, out of the 542 seats 79 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (See Table 3.1). The largest number of reserved seats are located in Uttar Pradesh where 18 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes. This is followed by 8 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes each in Bengal and Bihar. There is only one seat reserved for Scheduled Castes in the Union Territories and that is in Delhi. In the entire North-East and Assam there is only one seat reserved for Scheduled Castes.

Out of total 3997 assembly constituencies of the country, 557 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (see table 3.2). As regards the number of reserved constituencies in the state assemblies, U.P. tops where 92 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes. Then comes Bengal with 59, Bihar 48, Madhya Pradesh 44 and Tamil Nadu with 42 assembly seats reserved for Scheduled Castes.

3. Ibid., p.58.

Table 3.1

Number of Reserved Lok Sabha Constituencies for Scheduled Castes

State/Union Territory	Total	Reserved for Scheduled Castes
Andhra Pradesh	42	6
Assam	14	1
Bihar	54	8
Gujrat	26	2
Haryana	10	2
Himachal Pradesh	4	1
Jammu & Kashmir	6	-
Karnataka	28	4
Kerala	20	2
Madhya Pradesh	40	6
Maharashtra	48	3
Manipur	2	-
Meghalaya	2	-
Nagaland	1	-
Orissa	21	3
Punjab	13	3
Rajasthan	25	4
Sikkim	1	-
Tamil Nadu	39	7
Tripura	2	-
Uttar Pradesh	85	18
West Bengal	42	8
Andaman & Nicobar	1	-
Arunachal Pradesh	2	-
Chandigarh	1	-
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	-
Delhi	7	1
Goa, Daman & Diu	2	-
Lakshadweep	1	-
Mizoram	1	-
Pondichery	1	-
Total	542	79

Source: Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Twenty Eighth Report 1986-87 (New Delhi: Government of India, 1988), pp.532-33.

Table 3.2

Number of Reserved Constituencies for Scheduled Castes
in the state legislative assemblies

State/Union Territory	Total	Reserved for Scheduled Castes
Andhra Pradesh	294	39
Assam	126	8
Bihar	324	48
Gujrat	182	13
Haryana	90	17
Himachal Pradesh	68	16
Jammu & Kashmir	76	6
Karnataka	224	33
Kerala	140	13
Madhya Pradesh	320	44
Maharashtra	288	18
Manipur	60	1
Meghalaya	60	-
Nagaland	60	-
Orissa	147	22
Punjab	117	29
Rajasthan	200	33
Sikkim	32 ^a	2
Tamil Nadu	234	42
Tripura	60	7
Uttar Pradesh	425	92
West Bengal	294	59
Arunachal Pradesh	30	-
Delhi	56 ^b	9
Goa, Daman & Diu	30	1
Mizoram	30	-
Pondichery	30	5
Total	3397	557

Note: (a) Includes one seat reserved for Sangha constituency (Buddhist Monasteries)

(b) Metropolitan council constituencies.

Source: Report of the commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Twenty Eighth Report 1986-87 (New Delhi, Government of India, 1988), p.535.

The Article 81(1) of constitution provides for a reasonable proportion of seats or representatives for the Lok Sabha according to the population of each state. In this respect, noted constitutional expert B.N Rao had put up suggestions before the Constitution Committee. On the basis of the suggestions of B.N. Rao, it was provided in our constitution that maximum population with regard to a Lok Sabha constituency could vary between 7,50,000 and 5,00,000. The size of the electoral college in the assembly constituency was fixed at 75,000.⁴

The Constitution of India provides for the constituencies equal in size with respect to population for both Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. But it has not been possible to create constituencies equal in size with regard to electoral college. For instance, Mahasu Lok Sabha constituency in Himachal Pradesh had an electoral strength of 1,60,883 while Bombay City North had 7,64,016, 4.5 times greater than that of the former. The Bombay North-East remained the largest Lok Sabha constituency in the 4th and 5th general elections with the size of 8,44,838 and 8,58,986 electorates respectively.⁵ Thus, it has not been possible to

4. Report on the First General Elections (New Delhi, Government of India, 1955), p.39.

5. R.P. Bhalla, Op.Cit., p.88.

create ideal electoral constituencies in India, and of course, India is not an exception in this respect. Many other democratic countries have also failed to Carve out equal sized electoral colleges. shifting of population, for reasons of topography, means of transport and communications, employment, industrialization, etc. makes to continuously readjust the population size of the constituencies.⁶

The Articles 82 and 170(3) provide for the revision of the strength of people's representatives in the Lok Sabha and state legislatures after every census. This involves the process of redefining the territorial boundaries of each constituency to cope up with the factors of growth and migration of population. The territorial redefining of the boundaries of the constituencies can also be done following the constitutional amendments or the laws introduced by the Lok Sabha.

The procedure adopted for the delimitation of the constituencies always favoured the ruling party at the Centre. Jai Prakash Narayan was of the opinion that under Congress rule when the task of the delimitation of the constituencies first started on the principle of adult franchise it was practically the Congress party which was involved in the process of delimitation of the

6. Ibid., p.89.

constituencies. It was Congressmen who presided and dominated the various committees engaged in the whole exercise of delimitation. Interestingly the state governments which were asked to submit proposals for the delimitation were also Congress governments.⁷ So the recommendations favoured only the ruling party and safeguarded its interests effectively.

Hence an attempt will be made to analyse the procedure adopted in the demarcation and delimitation of the reserved constituencies. The role of political parties in influencing the process of delimitation and demarcation to safeguard their interests and the electoral malpractices would also come under the purview of our study.

The process of making a reserved constituency has degenerated into an instrument for the dominant political forces and the ruling party to serve their own interests. There are a number of reasons behind declaring a constituency reserved. The demarcation of constituency is based on geographic, demographic or social needs. But the decision to declare Agra West and Jalesar as reserved constituencies was determined by the political consideration favourable to the ruling party. Hence, we will briefly discuss the electoral malpractices perpetuated by the ruling party, i.e.

7. Janata, Vol.V, no.38 (New Delhi, 1950), p.5. Cited by R.P. Bhalla Op.Cit., p.50.

Congress, in the name of demarcating a particular constituency as reserved to safeguard its own political interest.

The intentional demarcation of Agra West and Jalesar as reserved constituencies was itself a kind of electoral abuse. Another electoral abuse was the gerry-mandering which has been practiced by different political forces with regard to Agra West and Jalesar reserved constituencies. These constituencies have undergone frequent structural changes resulting from the delimitation process, especially after the abolition of the system of double-member constituency in 1961. In view of the constantly changing physical nature of Agra West and Jalesar constituencies, it is necessary to know in detail as to how each of these abuses affected the alternation of electoral boundaries of the constituencies.

Politics of Reserving a Constituency

The intention of the ruling party in influencing the delimitation commission to declare a particular constituency as reserved lies with the fact that the ruling party wanted to check intra party factionalism. This factionalism may develop owing to mutual jealousies, lust of power and personal clashes within the party which come to the surface at the time of elections. The ruling party assumes that this kind of factionalism and mutual rivalry among the various political groups can be checked by creating a separate sphere

of influence or constituency for a particular group or leader. Therefore, the ruling party often intervened in the functioning of the Delimitation Commission to create reserved constituencies incorporating specific geographical areas, of its influence. Agra West and Jalesar reserved assembly constituencies for the Scheduled Castes are glaring examples of the political intervention in the process of the delimitation of a constituency. Agra West reserved constituency is dominated by the Jatavs. Before 1966, the Jatav dominated areas of the present Agra West were part of the Agra city- II general and Agra (rural) reserved assembly constituencies. Jalesar Tehsil forms the Jalesar reserved assembly constituency, though Marehra Pargana of Etah Tehsil was also part of the Jalesar double-member assembly constituency before 1961.

After 1961, the Delimitation Commission bifurcated Agra city-II and Jalesar constituencies into two separate assembly constituencies each. The Agra city-II was bifurcated into two parts. One came to be known as Agra city-II general assembly constituency and the another as Agra (rural) reserved assembly constituency for Scheduled Castes. Jalesar assembly constituency was declared as reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Marehra was declared general constituency which was the part of Jalesar prior to 1961.⁸

8. The Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Order 1961, (New Delhi: Election Commission of India, 1961), p.32.

There were a number of factors responsible for the abolition of double-member constituency. The migration as well as the unevenly distributed geographical unit of the double member constituency covering often more than one district causing operational difficulties contributed to the abolition. The Delimitation Commission argued that it was practically difficult for the Commission as well as political parties to carry out the election operations. Therefore, on technical ground the abolition of the double member constituency was made necessary.

Leaving aside the technical grounds, there were political reasons behind this. For instances, in Agra region, the Congress Party came under the grip of factionalism, mutual jealousies and mutual rivalry owing to the political ambitions of various groups. This was reflected at the time of the distribution of party tickets during the elections.

Paul Brass in his study of factional politics in U.P. suggests that factional politics depended largely upon the formation of groups around particular political leaders at the local level.⁹ These various groups try to secure benefits and also aim at advancement of their political status. Apart from the group formation as it is evident in the Congress organisation at the local level the defection

9. Paul R. Brass, Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh (Bombay, Oxford Press, 1966).

from one party to the another by a group or an individual is also a significant feature of the politics in the Agra region. At the time of election when a group or an individual is deprived of the party ticket, they do not adhere to the party decision. This situation often leads to the revolt or defection by a group or an individual which definitely affects the electoral prospect of the party's official candidate.

A senior Congressman, a party member since 1920s who had the experience of seeing his name cleared for the party ticket, saw suddenly that he was dropped from the list of party candidates. He decided to contest as an independent candidate. He got massive support for his decision to contest election as an independent candidate.¹⁰

At the local level, there were various groups within the Congress Party organisation in Agra district. One group was headed by Seth Achal Singh. Another group was known as Adiram Singal group and the third, Bhogilal Mishra group. Each group tried to maintain its superiority by securing party tickets, political appointments for its supporters or group leaders. The various groups also aim to secure control on the party organisation by outsmarting the rival groups.

10. D.B. Rosenthal, The Limited Elite: Politics and Government in Two Indian Cities (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p.61.

Thus, each group has to be vigilant and strong enough for its survival as it is a constant process of struggle by which one can maintain its hegemony or get defeated in the absence of political skill and state-craft.

In Agra the Congress was dominated by upper and middle castes right from its inception. During the national movement S.K.D. Paliwal was a prominent leader of the Congress. He was a Brahmin, did his M.A. and LLB, joined Congress and later became a member of All India Congress Committee (AICC). In 1927 he was appointed Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee and subsequently as UPCC President (1940-1946). In 1946 Paliwal became Cabinet Minister for Finance and Information, and became associated with the moderates like Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and J.B. Kripalani. In 1952, though he was offered Lok Sabha ticket from Agra he refused it as he wanted to contest the election for state assembly so that he could become a minister in the state government. When his aspiration was thrown overboard, he resigned from the party and formed Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party.¹¹ (KMPP). He contested election as an independent candidate from Agra Lok Sabha seat and secured 25.9% of the total votes. He was defeated by Seth Achal Singh who polled 57.6% of the total votes.¹²

11. Ibid., p.31.

12. Report on the First General Elections in India 1951-52, Vol.II (Statistical) (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1955), pp.476-77.

In 1957 Shri Krishna Dutt Paliwal posed a greater threat to the Congress. He contested assembly election as an independent candidate from Khairgarh assembly segment. Significantly K.D. Paliwal won the election with a thumping majority by defeating the Congress nominee Jagan Prasad Rawat. K.D. Paliwal secured 50.8 per cent of the total votes polled while Jagan Prasad could secure only 36 per cent.¹³

Jalesar also witnessed a similar conflict and schism. In 1957 assembly election Vachaspati and Roop Kishore Gautam claimed party ticket from Jalesar double member constituency, but party decided to field Vachaspati. This resulted in dissatisfaction among the supporters of Roop Kishore Gautam which helped the Praja Socialist Party candidate Raghuvir Singh Yadav to defeat Congress nominee. Thus, owing the intra party rivalry and mutual jealousies the Congress was facing serious organisational problems which often resulted in its defeat in the elections.

The ruling party i.e. the Congress in order to contain this intra party factionalism, influenced the Delimitation Commission, to carve out Agra (rural) and Jalesar area into assembly constituencies in such a way that these should not only become reserved but also incorporate Agra (rural) and

13. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, State Elections in India: Data Handbook on Vidha Sabha elections, 1952-85, Vol.4, The North Part II, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988), p.361.

Jalesar areas where factionalism within the Congress was deeply rooted. The Delimitation Commission, complying to the expectations of the Congress, carved out Agra city-II and Jalesar double member constituencies in 1961. It is true, while separating Agra (rural) constituency from Agra city II and Marehra from Jalesar Constituencies Commission carved out Agra (rural) and Jalesar constituencies in such a way as to include the 20 per cent of the Scheduled Caste population.

Now, after 1961, in these constituencies the upper caste leaders of Agra and Jalesar by virtue of their being non-Scheduled Castes were technically disqualified to contest the assembly election from Agra (rural) and Jalesar reserved constituencies. These leaders could not stop raising any problem for the Congress in the areas. Thus, the Congress party was successful in checking the factionalism and group rivalry by influencing the delimitation commission.

The Delimitation Commission tried to justify its acts of delimiting the constituency on the basis of certain technical and practical necessities arising out of the sharp growth in the population or the administrative reorganisation of the state. As we saw, the reality is quite different, Nagesh Jha rightly argues that the Delimitation Commission was politicised by the political forces which found their way into it¹⁴

14. Nagesh Jha "Delimitation of Constituencies: A Plea for Some Effective Criterion", Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol.24, 1963, p.133.

Electoral Abuse in the Party Interest

Jalesar was also a Lok Sabha double general constituency, consisting of five assembly segments - Jalesar and Nidhouli Kalan of Etah district, Sadabad of Mathura district, Etmadpur of Agra district and Tundla of Firozabad district. Out of these five assembly segments three seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes, and they are Jalesar, Etmadpur and Tundla.

In 1952, when Jalesar was a double -member assembly constituency Congress won both the seats i.e. the general and reserved. But in 1957, while the reserved seat was retained by Congress, the general seat was snatched by the Praja Socialist Party though in Lok Sabha seat the Congress nominee was elected successively in 1952 and 1957.

In 1957 Marehra Pargana Yadav dominated area was included in Jalesar double member constituency. The PS) candidate was a Yadav who received unprecedented support from the Yadav community. The Thakur's votes were divided between the two Thakur candidates, Vachaspati of Congress and Tursan Pal Singh of Jan Sangh. This contributed to the defeat of Congress nominee. Thus, Congress stronghold was weakened gradually due to factionalism and the changing caste equations.

In 1961, the system of double member constituency was abolished. It is believed that the Congress Party had

influenced the Delimitation Commission whereby Jalesar double member constituency was bifurcated into Marehra general constituency and Jalesar reserved assembly constituency for the Scheduled Castes.

Contrary to its expectation Congress Party got serious jolt in 1962, general elections. Table 3.3 indicates that out of total eight assembly seats in Etah District, the Congress could secure only one seat. Jan Sangh candidates succeeded in 4 assembly segments. One seat each was shared by PSP, Hindu Maha Sabha and Swatantra Party. However, the Congress party received 21.2 per cent of the total votes. The Jan Sangh secured 20 per cent of the total votes.

Table 3.3

Party-Wise Electoral Strength at the 1962 General Assembly Elections in Etah District

Party	Contested	Won	Voting percentage
Congress	8	1	21.2
Jan Sangh	7	4	20.0
PSP	8	0	14.2
RPI	7	1	13.5
HMS	7	1	11.6
SWT	5	1	11.4
SP	6	0	2.9
IND	7	0	5.2
Total	55	8	100.00

Source : Quoted from Craig Boxter District Voting Trends in India (New York, Columbia University Press, 1970), p.346.

As regards Agra in 1952 all the assembly seats were won by the Congress alongwith the Lok Sabha seat. The Congress continued to maintain its hold over the Lok Sabha seat upto 1971. Agra city-II double member assembly seat also went to Congress in 1957. In 1962 the Agra City II assembly seat was declared a general seat, and in the 1962 elections RPI candidate Khem Chand defeated the Congress candidate. Later on this constituency came to be known as Agra West assembly constituency. In 1967 election also RPI candidate won the election from the Agra West assembly constituency. But in 1969 elections Hukam Singh a B.K.D. candidate seriously challenged the hegemony of RPI and Congress and got elected from Agra West to the U.P. assembly. In 1974 the Agra West constituency was again declared as a reserved seat and here after the Congress continuously won this seat upto 1985 election. But in 1989 and 1991 elections B.J.P. emerged as a major political force in this constituency and defeated the Congress and Janata Dal candidates as well. Despite manipulation of the decisions of Delimitation Commission in demarcation of constituencies the Congress could not check the intra party factionalism. The Congress had also to face serious challenges from PSP, RPI and Jan Sangh. RPI and Jan Sangh had a strong base in certain pockets. These parties challenged the supremacy by defeating the Congress candidates in the elections.

Table 3.4

Party-wise Electoral Strength At the 1962 General Assembly
Elections in Agra District

Party	Contested	Won	Voting percentage
Congress	10	4	29.6
Jan Sangh	10	0	10.9
PSP	4	0	3.8
RPI	10	3	25.6
SWT	6	0	5.3
SP	6	2	8.5
IND	9	1	16.0
CPI	1	0	0.3
Total	55	8	100.00

Source : Quoted from Craig Boxter District Voting Trends in India (New York, Columbia University Press, 1970), p.347.

The table 3.4 shows that the Congress party secured 4 seats out of 10 in 1962 elections in Agra district. The RPI secured three seats, two went to Socialists and one to independent candidate (see table 3.4). Significance of this election lies in the victory of RPI candidates from general constituencies. In all these constituencies, Jatav candidates contested and won the election. They were Banwari Lal Bipra from Fatehabad, Bhagwan Das from Firozabad and Khem Chand from Agra city II. Though Banwari Lal won the election with a very little difference of votes, Bhagwan Das secured 20.3 per cent and Khem Chand, 34.1 per cent of the

total votes polled.¹⁵ The table also indicates that the Congress was defeated in most of the constituencies in the district, despite the fact that it secured 29.6 per cent of the total votes which is considerably higher than the other parties.

Therefore, the Congress party while facing strong opposition from the Jan Sangh and the RPI, wanted to ensure success in atleast some constituencies. To secure this objective the party wanted the Delimitation Commission to demarcate Agra East, Agra West, Agra Cantonment, Dayalbagh as new assembly constituencies in Agra district. As regards Etah district the party proposed to demarcate Soron and Nidhouli Kalan as seperate constituencies. This could be possible only when the Delimitation Commission was influenced to rearrange the electoral boundaries of Agra and Etah district assembly constituencies in such a way that these incorporated those segments where the Congress was in a strong position.

In 1966, the Delimitation Commission rearranged the boundaries of several constituencies-Agra West, Agra East, Agra Cantonment and Dayalbagh in Agra district and Nidhouli Kalan and Soron in Etah district. The Delimitation Commission also reported to the election commission that

15. V.B. Singh and Sankar Bose, op.cit., p.361.

Dayalbagh and Soron would be reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes. In 1967, Agra East had nine corporation wards from the Agra city I of 1962. The Agra Cantonment constituency of 1967 contained five of the same wards and parts of another from Agra city-II of 1962. The new Agra West constituency got four wards from Agra city (rural) and three from Agra city II, in addition to having a small part of rural Agra. The Soron reserved assembly constituency was carved out from Sahawar general assembly segment. It consisted, in 1967 of Soron Municipality and Soron Block, Mohanpur Town area, Sahawar Block and Amanpur Block. The new Nidhouli Kalan constituency was carved out from Marehra Pargana, and Awagarh Block of Jalesar reserved constituency.¹⁶

Again, when the ruling party faced problems, it approached the Delimitation Commission for favour. In 1967 and 1969 assembly elections Soron reserved assembly seat was bagged by BJS candidate Siya Ram and Dayalbagh constituency was won by Congress in 1967 and by BKD in 1969. From Agra West general assembly constituency a Jatav candidate contesting election on RPI banner got elected in 1967. In 1969 mid-term poll Agra West went to BKD candidate Hukum Singh. After the defeat of Congress in 1967 and 1969

16. Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituency 1966 (New Delhi: Election Commission of India, 1967), pp.343-344.

assembly elections from Dayalbagh and Soron reserved assembly constituencies and Agra West general constituency, the Congress party once again influenced the Delimitation Commission to declare Dayalbagh and Soron general constituencies and Agra west reserved for Scheduled Castes. Simultaneously Etamadpur and Tundla in the Agra district were also declared reserved assembly constituencies for Scheduled Castes. Swami Sureshanand of BJP, the present MP from Jalesar, says that the ruling party declared those as reserved seats where the higher castes, especially Thakurs are in majority. He argues that Jalesar, Tundla and Etamadpur constituencies where the Thakurs are in majority are declared reserved for the Scheduled Castes because Congress (I) wanted to alienate Thakurs from the power and capture the seat without competition.¹⁷

There is another illustration of delimitation where the Congress party influenced the Delimitation Commission to detach some portions from one constituency and add it to another. This was evident when the Delimitation Commission detached Kotla Block from Jalesar reserved assembly constituency and attached it to Tundla reserved constituency. Similarly, Awagarh block was detached from Nidhouli Kalan and was attached with Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. It was alleged that the commission effected these changes under

17. Interview with Swami Sureshanand, 8 October, 1991.

the pressure from the Congress party. In Agra city also Delimitation commission undertook rearrangement of the boundaries of Agra East, Agra West and Agra Cantonment assembly constituencies. Chatrapati Ambesh alleged that the Delimitation Commission has changed the boundaries to manage support for the Congress party.¹⁸

The Awagarh Block was the portion of Nidhouli Kalan constituency before 1977 election. This area remained traditionally a stronghold of BJP. The BJP had an edge over the Congress votes in Awagarh Block. The BJP has got mass base among the Thakurs in this Block. The Thakurs are numerically as well as economically dominant caste in this area. In this constituency they have always supported opposition party capable of defeating Congress party. This was proved by the 1989 and 1991 assembly and Lok Sabha elections when the Thakur community strongly supported BJP. The BJP candidate Madhav Nut won the assembly elections in 1989 and 1991. Thus, it is clear that in the Thakur dominated areas the Congress party found it difficult to spread its base.

The BJP has strong mass base among the trading communities of Agra city. In 1967 and 1985 elections BJP candidates successfully defeated Congress in Agra East general assembly constituency. Ram Shankar Agarwal in 1967

18. Interview with C.P. Ambesh, Ex M.P. on 15 July 1991.

and Satya Prakash Vikal in 1985. Interestingly in 1989 and 1991 assembly elections too BJP candidates were successful in three assembly segments of the Agra city. Significantly BJP candidates for the first time got elected from the Jalesar and Agra Lok Sabha seats ever since independence.

To sum up, the Congress party influenced the decisions of Delimitation Commission and Election Commission in demarcating the constituencies of assembly and Lok Sabha to curb intra party factionalism and refractory elements within the party to safeguard its electoral interests.

Thus, it can be conclusively said that the delimitation of the boundaries was not carried out purely on technical considerations, but these boundary changes also involved the political considerations of ruling party. Electoral abuses like delimitation of the constituencies and intentional identification of a constituency as reserved one are the methods resorted to. The present discussion shows that the Congress Party in UP not only manipulated delimitation of the constituencies but it also got Agra West and Jalesar constituencies declared as reserved. Overall, it was delimitation that led to the frequent changes in the Agra West and Jalesar assembly reserved constituencies. The method of delimitation helped the Congress party in number of ways such as curbing intra party factionalism and rivalry and raising the chances of victory in the election by bringing in areas favourable to Congress to a particular constituency.

It is also believed that the ruling party can also resort to impose the election commission to reserve a particular constituency in order to nullify the upper caste opposition, both internal and external. Our study shows that with this policy of reserving a constituency, as the Congress did in the cases of Agra West and Jalesar assembly constituencies, it succeeded in rendering the upper caste intra party factionalism irrelevant.

This intention of Congress behind the political reservation boils down to the fact that the technical status of the reserved constituency can prevent the non-Scheduled Castes from contesting the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the reserved constituency, and this can hamper the growth of their competitive political perception and render ineffective any potential challenge to the ruling party.

CHAPTER IV

**POLITICS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC
CHARACTERISTICS IN AGRA AND JALESAR**

Political behaviour does not take place in a vacuum, but it grows in a certain context of socio-economic and political development, with the historical background of the cultural heritage of a society. All these factors are inter-related, and linked to the ideology prevalent in the society as well. The social structure is effected by economic development which leads to social and political changes. It is in this context that we propose to discuss the socio-economic background of Agra and Jalesar U.P. assembly constituencies. It is therefore, necessary to analyse the socio-economic conditions such as education, occupation etc., and political awareness and participation of Scheduled Castes in the two reserved assembly constituencies chosen for the present study.

A Brief History of Agra:

Agra emerged as a prominent urban centre in 1505 A.D. when Sikandar Lodi established his military head quarters there. During the Mughal Rule, Agra became the capital and the premier city of the empire. In the sixteenth century, the Mughal emperor, Akbar moved the city from the left bank of the river Yamuna to its right bank where the city stands today. Akbar built the Agra fort and in 1653 during the regime of Shahjahan the world famous Taj Mahal was built. Both the buildings attract tourists from all over the world, and have added a cosmopolitan outlook to the city. In 1803

the city was occupied by the British. Subsequently, a cantonment was established two years later, and they also made Agra the capital of north-western province under the Lt. Governership of Metcalf. Agra Municipality came into existence in 1870. During the freedom struggle, Agra became an important centre of political activity especially for its revolutionary cult.

Agra city, which occupies an uneven plain, is made up of a number of localities which came into existence at different times. A business area started emerging in the heart of the city and commercial sub-centres began to spring up around it.

Agra district of independent India is located in the Hindi speaking heartland, and it lies in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. To the west and south-west of the district lies Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh forms the southern boundary. North is bounded by the districts of Mathura and Etah and east by districts Firozabad and Etawah. Agra district with the total area of 4027 sq.kms. is divided into six Tehsils, viz. Bah, Kiraoli, Fatehabad, Keiragarh Fatehpur Sikri and Agra. Agra has 15 Blocks, 927 Gram Panchayats, 4 Nagar Palikas, 8 town areas and one cantonment. There are 40 police stations in the district, in which 16 are situated in rural area and 24 are situated in urban areas.¹

1. Sankhiyakiya Patrika, Janpad Agra (Hindi) 1989, p.1.

Agra district has nine Assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha constituency. Assembly constituencies are Agra Cantonment, Agra East, Agra West, Dayal Bagh, Fatehpur Sikri, Khairagarh, Bah, Fatehbad and Etamadpur. Agra Lok Sabha constituency is composed of five state assembly segments viz Agra West, Agra Cantonment, Agra East, Dayal Bagh and Fatehpur Sikri among which Agra West is reserved for Scheduled Castes. A further distinction can be made on the rural and urban basis; Agra Cantonment, Agra East and Agra West are urban while Dayal Bagh and Fatehpur Sikri are rural segments.

Social Demography of Agra:

The demography of the district shows a higher strength of rural and male population. According to 1971 census of India the total population of Agra district was 23,08,638 and it increased to 28,52,942 in 1981. The increase was by 23.58 per cent. The rural-urban ratio is 61.90:38.10, while the average gender ratio is 55.20:44.80 favouring the male population. (The figure is deduced from Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Rural-Urban Population in Agra District

(in percentage)

	Persons	Male	Female
Rural	61.90	55.20	44.80
Urban	38.10	53.91	46.09

Source: Census of India, 1981, Series 22, Part II-B, U.P. Primary Census Abstract, p.116.

The Hindus and the Muslims are the main religious communities in the district. Both the communities constitute 98.14 per cent of total population in the district. Out of which the Hindus are 87.16 per cent and Muslims 10.98 per cent. Besides these Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs are 0.81 per cent, 0.40 per cent and 0.37 per cent respectively. As Table 4.2 shows, the Hindus are highly populated in rural areas. But Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs and Christians are numerically fair in urban areas.

The Hindu society is divided into numerous caste, and sub-castes. There are Brahmins, Rajputs, Vaishyas, Kayasthas, Jats and Scheduled Castes among the Hindus who have been living in the district since very early times. The majority of Brahmins belonging to Gaur, Saraswat and Kanyakubjya live in Sanadh sub-division. The Rajputs like Chauhan, Jadon,

Table 4.2

Total Population of Agra District According to Religion

Religion	Population			Percentage
	Total	Rural	Urban	
Hindus	24,86,592	16,87,739	7,99,153	87.16
Muslims	3,13,202	68,876	2,44,325	10.98
Christians	6,903	681	6,222	0.24
Sikhs	10,565	386	10,179	0.37
Buddhist	11,440	3,416	8,024	0.40
Jains	23,179	5,119	18,060	0.81
Others	1,062	113	949	0.04
Total	28,52,942	17,66,330	10,86,912	100.00

Source: Sankhyayika Patrika, Janpad Agra (Hindi), 1989, p.28.

Sikarwar, Tomar, Pawar, Rathore, Parihar, Pundir, Bachhil etc. are dominant in Bah, Khairagarh and Fatehabad. Their main occupation is agriculture. Vaishyas are found every where in the district, who generally engage themselves in trade and commerce. Their main sub castes are Agarwal, Khandelwal, Oswal, Jaiswal and Churawal. The Jats are mainly concentrated in Agra and Kiraoli Tehsil. Their main sub-castes are Barh, Parawat and Sinsinwar. The Kayasthas like Saxena and Srivastava also live in this city. There are some other castes such as Ahir, Lodh, Mallah, Barahi, Gujar, Nai, Kumhar and Garadiya.

Muslims are minorities communities in Agra district. They are predominantly Sunnis while the Shia sect has a very insignificant presence. According to 1901 census Sunni constitute 91.50 per cent of the total Muslim population of the district. There is one Muslim Scheduled Caste, namely Lalbagi. It is believed that the Muslims of Agra district are generally descendants of early Muslim immigrants. The Sheikhs, the Saiyeds, the Pathans and the Mughals, are often called "Ashraf". Some converted Muslims also reside in the district. Sheikhs occupy first position in terms of numerical strength and they mostly reside in urban areas. They form sub groups like Qureshi, Siddiqui, Osmani and Faruqi. The Pathans are scattered all over the Tehsils and they are mainly sub divided into Bangash, Afridi and Kaker. The Saiyeds are mostly concentrated with Agra Tehsil. They are sub-divided into Zaidi and Zafri. The Mughals are also found in Agra Tehsil. They are the descendants of Muhammed Beg, who got married to a Rajput woman and acquired a large estate. They are in meagre numbers. They are mostly residing in Trans Yamuna tract and Tehsil of Agra and Kiraoli. Other Muslim castes in the district are generally occupational such as Bhesti, Bhangi, Teli, Qassab, Nai, Dhobi, Julaha, Darzi, Manihar, Chiphi etc.

Most of the Jains dwell in urban areas. They are the Vaishyas sub-divided into Agrawal, Khandelwal, Oswal, Jaiswal and Padmavati Purwal. They are mainly traders and

businessmen. They belong to both the sects i.e. Digambar and Shvetamber. But the majority of them belong to Digambar sect.

There are two more religious communities in Agra, viz, Christians and Buddhists. As elsewhere, Christians are sub divided into Roman Catholic and Protestant sects. Buddhists are mostly concentrated in Chakkipat locality of Agra city.

Table 4.3

Caste-wise Scheduled Caste Population in Agra District, 1971

(SC Population = 100)

Sub-castes	Percentage
Chamar	69.72
Balmiki	11.15
Dhobi	6.57
Khatik	4.08
Shipkar	1.29
Kanjar	0.73
Dhanuk	0.53
Nut	0.53
Others	5.28

Source: Census of India, 1971, Series 21, U.P. Part-II-C-(ii), Social cultural Tables, p.724.

The Scheduled Castes constitute 22.09 per cent of the total population of the district with a rural strength of 63.37 per cent and 36.63 per cent urban.² Among the Scheduled Castes 31 sub castes are found in the district out of 66 sub-castes in Uttar Pradesh. Table-4.3 shows that the Jatavs or Chamars are highly populated in Agra district and they constitute 69.72 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population of the district. The Balmikis come next to Jatavs, they constitute 11.15 per cent and Dhobis are 6.57 per cent of the total population of the Scheduled Castes.

Agra West Assembly Constituency

This constituency consists of the residential areas of the Agra city.³ The total strength of the electorate of this constituency is 176079 persons. The distinctive feature of the constituency is that in some localities the percentage of the Scheduled Castes is 95 to 99 per cent. The religious composition of the constituency is sufficiently heterogenous

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2. Census of India, 1981.
 3. The Agra west assembly constituency consists of Sikandra, Bodla, Gadi Badoriya, Jagdishpura, Billochpura, Madia Katra, Civil Lines, Delhi Gate, Professor Colony, Bagh Farjana, Khandari Road, Lajpat Kunj, South Ki Mandi, Khandari, Malviyakunj, Jatpura, New Raja Mandi, Moti Kunj, Khatipara, Mandi Saydkhan, Ghatia Azamkhan, Shitla Gali, Chilli-int, Raja Mandi, Mansa Devi, Gokulpura, Ashok Nagar, Baklka Basti, Naubasta, Naya Bans, Rajnaar, Ladli Katra, Hasanpura, Chillipara, Cherbagh, Panchkuia, Namak Ki Mandi, Bhogipura, Nagla Prathvinath, Prakash Nagar, Shiv Dasani Nagar, Rui Ki Mandi, Nagla Chhaua, Nagla Faqir Chand, Biharipura, Saray Bhanja, Khewaspura, Chawali etc.

with large numbers of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jains, concentrated in different areas. Another significant feature of this constituency is the widespread influence of caste organisations like Baghel Sabha, Kori Samaj Sabha, Jatav Panchayat, Jatav Darbar etc. which have a considerable influence over the members of their respective caste groups.

Agra is not as economically backward as many other cities of Uttar Pradesh. Agra is very important as a tourist centre and also suitable for commercial pursuits. Tourism generates considerable employment for the people of Agra. Major industrial economy has also flourished with the development of the shoe factories, grain mills, oil and a complex of spinning and weaving mills etc. The Agra district occupies the second place in the whole state in respect of the operation of the small scale industries and third place as regards to the number of workers employed in both the large scale and the small scale industries. The large scale industries of the district are the metal and iron, the cotton spinning, the dal, oil and the leather tanning industries.⁴ The stone carving of Agra has also acquired a worldwide reputation. Agra is famous for its fretwork (Jali) or tracery with geometrical patterns made in sandstone, soap stone or marble.⁵

4. E.B. Joshi, Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteers, Agra, (Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Government, 1965), p.145.

5. Ibid., p.155.

As Lynch has commented, "Shoe making in Agra is more than a caste occupation, it is a family business and a way of life. . . Almost every grown-up male knows at least the basic knowledge of shoes making it is only the educated or rich young men who has not, at one time or another, put his hand to the Cobbler's thread and owl. Most children pick up some knowledge of the trade in their own or in their neighbour's home".⁶ The shoe factories are owned by Muslims and Jatavs, and today the labour force of the shoe industry is by and large drawn from the Jatavs. According to a survey of 1960, out of a sample of 1351, 85.8 per cent were Jatavs and 14.2 per cent were Muslims.⁷ The majority of workers are of low social status because of their abject poverty and illiteracy. They are considered untouchables, by the rest of the Hindu society.

At the turn of the century the shoe industry in Agra began to grow, and it expanded greatly during the first and second world wars. By the end of second World war the shoe markets existed in Agra as it existed in Germany, USSR, Bulgaria, Britain, and USA etc. In this period, about 60 shoe companies were exporting shoes to other countries. Some

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6. Owen, M. Lynch, The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1969), p.47.
 7. Ram Jhalak Sisodia, Cottage Shoe Worker in Agra (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of commerce, Raja Balwant Singh College, Agra, 1960), p.19.

of these exporting companies were, Bajaj Departmental Store, Tajumal Private Limited, Wasan and Company, Rajasthan Charmkala Centre, Happy International Leather Company, Ram Nath Export Private Limited, Sobin Enterprises etc. According to a report of the commerce ministry in the last three years shoe export from Agra has earned a foreign exchange of Rs. 88 crores in 1985-86, Rs. 110 crores in 1986-87 and 160 crores in 1987-88.⁸

Jatavs are mainly cobblers. In Agra city, Jatavs are about one sixth of the total population. Nowadays Jatavs are migrating to the cities for two vital reasons: the inhuman atrocities are inflicted upon them by upper caste Hindus in the villages, and the urban demand of their skilled jobs assures a good income for them. A large section of the Jatav community has migrated to Agra, who at present are largely engaged in this leather business.

There are seven major Scheduled Caste communities in Agra city. They are the Chamar, Balmiki, Khatik, Dhobi, Kanjar, Shilpkar and Rawat. The Chamars or Jatavs constitute the highest share of 56.83 per cent, and then the Balmiki with 22.09 per cent of the total population of Scheduled Castes in the Agra city (See table 4.4). The Scheduled Castes of the Agra city are concentrated mainly in places

8. Amar Ujala, July 28, 1990 (Agra).

Table 4.4

Major Scheduled Castes in Agra city 1971

(SC population = 100)

Sub-castes	Percentage
Balmiki	22.09
Chamar	56.83
Dhobi	4.77
Kanjar	1.58
Khatik	6.91
Rawat	1.08
Shilpkar	1.12
Others	5.62

Source: Census of India, 1971. Series 21, U.P. Part II C(ii), Social Cultural Tables p. 724.

like Loha Mandi, Naubasta, Jagdishpura, Ram Nagar, Sawan Katra, etc. In these areas Scheduled Castes constitute about 70 per cent of the total population.

Literacy Among the Scheduled Castes of Agra:

Education and literacy among the Scheduled Castes is not remarkably different from rest of their brethren in the country. Agra is an educational centre. There are 1352 Primary schools, 331 Senior basic schools, 116 High schools and intermediate schools, 8 Degree colleges and 2

Universities in Agra district (see table 4.5). In spite of the growth of these educational institutions, a proportionate impact of these is not visible among the Scheduled Caste population, largely because of acute poverty and the resultant low level of socio-political consciousness. The literacy rate in the district is 33.45 per cent, the rural and urban literacy rate in the district is 26.57 and 44.62 per cent respectively.⁹

Table 4.5

Educational Institutions in Agra District

Primary Schools	Senior Basic School	High school and Intermediate College	Degree College	Universities
1352	331	116	8	2

Source: Sankhikiya Patrika, Janpad Agra (Hindi), 1989, p.3.

Against this backdrop, if we examine the literacy rate of the Scheduled Castes category, we find that the overall literacy rate of the Scheduled Caste population in the district is 20.83 per cent, less than the literacy rate of the total population, the literacy rate of the Scheduled Caste females is extremely low viz., 7.28 per cent as against

9. Census of India, 1981, Series 22, Part IIB, U.P. Primary Census Abstract, p.XXXI.

the overall female literacy rate of the district being 19.90 per cent. Although the literacy rate of the Scheduled Caste males closely approaches the overall district rate, as it is 31.85 per cent, it is still much less than the overall male literacy rate of the district 44.65 per cent (see table 4.6).

Apart from this kind of disparity between the literacy rate of the overall population and the Scheduled Caste community, there is found an uneven spread of literacy among the Scheduled Caste community itself.

Among the Scheduled Castes, Balmikis and Kanjar are very less educated, while the level of higher education achieved by the literate Chamars and Dhobis is pretty high, and as such, they are the most socially conscious section among Scheduled Castes of the state in general and of Agra city in particular.

Table 4.6
Literacy Rate in Agra District
(in per cent)

	Persons	Males	Females
Total	33.45	44.65	19.90
SC	20.83	31.85	7.28

Source : Census of India, 1981, p.116.

The main reason for low education among Scheduled Castes in Agra city is that the city is populated by Jatavs and Balmikis, both the castes being engaged in their traditional occupations. As Owen Lynch stated that when a boy leaves school in his early teens he attaches himself to a man who has his own shoe shop or works in a larger factory owned by another man.¹⁰ Despite being low, the educational progress has contributed towards the political participation of the Scheduled Castes in the Agra district and Agra city.

Etah District: A Socio-economic Profile:

Etah district where the Jalesar reserved constituency is located forms part of Western Uttar Pradesh. The district is bordered by Furrukhabad in the east, Aligarh, Mathura and Agra in the west, the Ganga River and Badaun district in north and Mainpuri and Firozabad districts in the South. The district has a stretch of 67 miles from south west to north east and 43 miles from north to south. According to Survey of India, the district has an area of 4,446 sq. kms. The district is divided into five Tehsils, viz. Etah, Jalesar, Kasganj, Patiyali and Aliganj for administrative purposes.

The population of the district according to 1971 census of India was 15,70,925 and by 1981 this increased to

10. Owen M. Lynch, Op. Cit., p.47.

18,58,692, a 18.32 per cent growth. Etah is predominantly a Hindu district. Among Hindus, the Chamars or Jatavs form the most numerous group in strength. They constitute 15.07 per cent of the total population of the district, and are scattered over the rural areas. They are engaged in their traditional occupation and also constitute a sizeable section to agricultural labour. The second numerous caste is the Ahir (Yadav) who form 11.61 per cent of the total population. Traditionally, they are the land owning community engaged in cultivation. The Lodhs constitute 11.56 per cent and are considered to be excellent cultivators. The Thakur constitute 10.6 per cent and are densely populated in Jalesar constituency where they form 15 per cent. The Brahmins constitute 11.02 per cent of the population of the Etah district. The Gadariyas constitute 4.45 per cent, and their traditional occupation is cattle rearing which includes sheep and goats. These days the Gadariyas have started switching over to cultivation. The Banias are 7.07 per cent and they are numerous in Kasganj and sparse in Jalesar (see table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Caste-wise Population in Etah District

(Total Population = 100)

Caste	Percentage
Chamar	15.07
Ahir	11.61
Lodh	11.56
Thakur	10.61
Brahmin	11.02
Gadariya	4.02
Bania	7.07
Others	28.61

Source: E.R. Neave, Etah: A Gazetteer (Allahabad: Government Press United Provinces, 1911), pp.71-81.

The Thakurs are still the leading landowners. According to the settlement report of 1873, however, the Brahmins, Thakurs, Kacchis, Lodhs and Ahirs were almost equal in numbers. These castes constituted 65 per cent of the cultivators of the district. Later studies do not indicate any significant change since then. Thakurs, Chauhans and Rathores are still averse to cultivation or handling the plough. The Rajputs sometimes cultivate their land through their family labour and with help from other classes as well.

The Brahmins are not good at cultivation and their landholdings are the samples of inferior cultivation. The Lodhs who form the backbone of the agrarian economy are excellent cultivators. They prefer to cultivate sugarcane, wheat, maize etc.¹¹

Table 4.8

The Total Population of Etah District According to Religion

Religion	Population			Percentage
	Total	Rural	Urban	
Hindus	16,52,569	14,48,290	2,04,270	88.91
Muslims	1,94,323	1,16,258	78,065	10.46
Christians	3,228	2,225	1,003	0.17
Sikhs	1,896	552	1,344	0.10
Buddhists	2,177	2,009	168	0.12
Jains	4,440	1,385	3,055	0.24
Others	61	-	61	0.00
Unidentified religion	7	7	-	0.00
Total	18,58,692	15,70,726	2,87,966	100.00

Source : Sankhikya Patrika Janpad Etah (Hindi), 1988, p.28.

11. E.R. Neave, Etah: A Gazetteer (Allahabad: Government Press United Provinces, 1911), pp. 99-100.

As table 4.8 indicates that the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are the religious groups very less in number other than Hindus. Out of the total population 18,58,692 in Etah district, 88.91 per cent are Hindus and 10.46 per cent Muslims.

The total population of the Scheduled Castes in the district is 3,17,422 which computes to 17.08 per cent. Out of 66 sub castes of the Scheduled Castes in the state, 27 are found in the Etah district. These major sub castes are Jatav, Dhobi, Balmiki, Dhanuk etc. As table 4.9 shows that the Jatavs constitute 64.45 per cent of the entire Scheduled

Table 4.9

Major Sub-Castes of Scheduled Castes in Etah District, 1971

Sub-castes	Per cent
Chamar	64.45
Dhobi	14.21
Balmiki	7.43
Dhanuk	3.92
Nut	0.49
Agaria	0.30
Others	9.20
Total	100.00

Source: Census of India, 1971, U.P. Social Cultural Tables, Part II-C(II), p.730.

Caste population. Their socio-economic condition is better than their other sub caste brethren. The Jatavs are either cultivators and agricultural labourers or engaged in their traditional occupation. Those who have migrated to the cities are doing leather work. Now they have started working in big companies such as Bata etc. Most of the staff in these Companies belong to the Jatav community.

The Dhobis form the second largest community among the Scheduled Castes. They constitute 14.21 per cent of the Scheduled Caste population in Etah district. They are engaged in cultivation and also work as agricultural labourers. Since their traditional occupation is no more profitable in the rural areas, they are migrating to towns and cities in search of a better livelihood. Those who have migrated to urban centres have improved their social status.

The Balmikis form the third largest community constituting 7.43 per cent. They are landless labourers and are also engaged in their traditional occupation, i.e. scavenging. Almost in all offices of Etah and Agra districts, balmikis are recruited in class IV service as sweepers. The Dhanuks occupy fourth place in numerical strength. They constitute 3.92 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population in Etah district. They are also landless agricultural labourers and some are engaged in their traditional occupation.

As far as social condition of the Scheduled Castes is concerned, their houses are placed in the outskirts. The stigma of untouchability and pollution makes them ritually and socially segregated from the Hindu society. The untouchables occupy a peculiar position in the Hindu social structure. Traditionally, they are considered outside the varna system but in practice they are an integral part of society. Untouchability is a stigma attached to various social groups resulting from their polluted status. This stigma, lasts a lifetime and can not be eliminated by rite or by deed.

Jalesar Constituency

Etah district consists of eight legislative assembly constituencies - Aliganj, Kasganj, Patiyali, Soron, Sakit, Etah, Nidhouli Kalan and Jalesar. Among these constituencies Jalesar is the only reserved assembly constituency for Scheduled Castes. This constituency consists of two blocks namely, Awagarh and Jalesar consisting of 162 rural villages and two towns viz., Awagarh and Jalesar. Jalesar town is situated in South-West, 40 kms. away from the district headquarters. It is situated between the Isan and Singer river, about a mile away from the left bank of the Singer river.

The word 'Jalesar' has been derived from a Hindi word, 'Jaleshwar' which is the combination of the two words, 'Jal'

and 'Ishwar' which mean 'The God of Water'. For some people, Jaleshwar means the "Nagri of Jal", the city of water. According to Dashratha Sharma, the word, "Jalesar" came from its Sanskrit equivalent Jaleshwar, something related to Lord Shiva. Once upon a time there were so many followers of Lord Shiva from this place and they constructed a temple which stands to this day in the name of 'Chintaharan Mandir' as a mute sentinel to past belief. Now the same Jaleshwar is mispronounced as 'Jalesar'. Jalesar has its own historical importance. The Muslims are said to have rallied under the command of Saiyed Ibrahim who was killed in 1403 A.D. while resisting an invasion. He is now remembered as a martyr. A festival is celebrated every year in the memory of Saiyed Ibrahim. His tomb is a meeting place for the pilgrims and give testimony to Jalesar's long history.¹² During British rule, Jalesar was a tehsil of Mathura district. Then, until 1834 it was part of the Agra district. In 1876 it was added to Etah district. Now Jalesar is known as a Tehsil, legislative assembly constituency and Lok Sabha constituency.

The economy of Jalesar is agriculture-based. In Jalesar constituency out of total main workers, 5.59 per cent constitute landless labourers who work in the agricultural farms of the upper castes. As Table 4.10 indicates, the

12. K.P. Sharma, Rules and Bye Laws of the Municipality (Etah: Aulaz Press, 1975), pp.208-10.

agricultural labour are highly concentrated in the rural areas. The cultivators constitute 8.48 per cent of the total workers of the constituency (see Table 4.11). In the rural areas the Scheduled Caste females are also engaged in agricultural labour and cultivation in the field.

Table 4.10

Agricultural Labourers among the Scheduled Castes in Jalesar Constituency

(in per cent)

Persons	Male	Female	
Total	5.59	9.61	7.64
Rural	10.53	10.54	9.77
Urban	2.31	2.36	0.90

Source: Census of India, 1981, Series 22 U.P. Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, p.130.

Table 4.11

Cultivators Labourers Among the Scheduled Castes in Jalesar
Constituency (in per cent)

Persons	Male.	Female
Total	8.48	8.51
Rural	9.44	9.46
Urban	1.05	1.05

Source: Census of India, 1981, Series 22 U.P. Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, p.129.

A few Scheduled Caste members have received small patches of land through the 20 Point Programme. But, even then, they are not able to cultivate due to the lack of resources and irrigation facilities. In most of the cases they did not get possession of their land holding, due to the complex administrative procedure.

The higher class peasants who possess substantial land holdings in villages give the land in share cropping or lease to the Scheduled Castes. In return they are required to give 50 per cent of the crop production. Sometimes it so happens that when a Scheduled Caste person takes loan from the landlord and is unable to repay the loan, his land is acquired by the landlord and the loaneer ends his life as a labourer in his own field. In return for his labour he gets

a paltry sum of Rs.15 a day or 7-8 kgs. of wheat or its equivalent as his daily wages. Unlike male workers, children and women are paid less. There is no protest movement demanding the implementation of the minimum wage act, passed by the government. They know, if they protest against low wages, they would have to face dire consequences, which suggest the continuity of social tension and conflict in the rural society.

The soil is fertile in Jalesar. There are two major crop seasons in this region - (i) Kharif and (ii) Rabi. The crops grown in Kharif season mostly depend on rainfall. The major kharif crops are maize, rice, bajra, jowar, cotton, etc. The crops raised in rabi season are wheat, gram, barley etc. Wheat and rice crops are cultivated in large scale in this region (See table 4.12). Besides these, sugarcane, mustard etc. are also cultivated in this constituency. The different sources of irrigation are tubewells, canals etc. The cultivators belonging to higher castes possessing substantial land holding irrigate their land by their own tubewells. But the cultivators belonging to the lower rungs of the society hardly possess any irrigated land (see table 4.13).

Table 4.12

Crops cultivated in Jalesar and Awagarh Blocks*

(in hectare)

Block	Fertile land	Rice cultivated land	Wheat cultivated land	Maize cultivated land	Barley cultivated land
Jalesar	36098	1960	13911	1559	3302
Awagarh	28442	3984	9981	1688	1931

* Jalesar and Awagarh Blocks constitute Jalesar reserved assembly constituency.

Source: Sankhikiya Patrika, Janpad, Etah (Hindi), 1988, pp.37-40.

Table - 4.13

Land Irrigated in Different Sources in Jalesar and Awagarh Blocks (In hectare and per cent)

Block	Canals	Tubewells	Wells	Others
Jalesar	5425 (38.8)	10418 (61.1)	261 (1.5)	942 (5.5)
Awagarh	3450 (29.8)	7121 (61.6)	75 (6.7)	86 (1.8)

Source: Sankhikiya Patrika, Janpad Etah (Hindi), 1988, p.18.

The upper caste cultivators use tractors to plough their farm, while Scheduled Caste peasants still use the traditional methods of irrigation and cultivation. Majority of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood in this region. No significant change is found in the use of technologically improved agricultural implements and methods by the Scheduled Caste peasants. They are least interested in adopting modern scientific methods of cultivation owing to scanty resources and low literacy and the resultant lack of scientific outlook.

Literacy among the Scheduled Castes of Jalesar:

The literacy rate in the Jalesar constituency is 30.90 per cent while that of Scheduled Castes is only 18.83 per cent. In rural areas the literacy rate is still less. As table 4.14 indicates, the literacy rate among Scheduled Castes in urban areas is 23.11 per cent higher than in the rural areas.

In the rural areas, the Scheduled Caste literates are mostly non-matric; the Scheduled Caste girls are almost illiterate. As regards the level of literacy among the female population belonging to the Scheduled Caste. The table shows that about 4.46 percentage of the total female population is literate. In rural areas the situation is

Table 4.14
Literay Rate Among the Scheduled Castes in Jalesar
Constituency

(in per cent)

	Persons	Male	Female
Total	18.83	30.41	4.46
Rural	18.39	30.10	3.85
Urban	23.11	93.54	10.45

Source: Census of India, 1981, Series 22, U.P. Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, pp.128-129.

miserable as only 3.85 per cent of the total SC female population is literate whereas in urban areas the level of literacy is slightly better compared to the rural areas. In urban areas the percentage of female literacy is 10.45. This in perhaps due to the low percentage of drop out rates and better educational facilities in the urban areas. According to one survey, out of 8605 girl students in IXth to XIIth classes, only 1569 are Scheduled Caste girl students, and in degree colleges, out of total 1010 girl students, only 58 belongs to Scheduled Castes.¹³ The reason for the low education among the girls is their socio-economic

13. Sankhikiya Patrika, Janpad, Etah (Hindi), 1988, pp.80-81.

backwardness which compels them to drop out from the schools in the very beginning. The parents do not like to send their daughters to school because they feel that the girls afterwards have to become only house wives and there is no need to spend money on them. Moreover, the girls are considered as unsafe in rural areas to be left alone. They cannot come out of their houses without a proper escort. In general, the dropout rate among the Scheduled Caste children are greater than that in non-Scheduled Caste children, as they are pre-occupied with the job of helping their parents in earning the daily bread for their family by either joining them in their traditional occupation or they are employed as manual labourers by the farmers.

The table 4.15 shows that the Jalesar constituency has 148 primary schools and 40 senior schools, 8 high schools and intermediate colleges and one degree college is situated in Jalesar city. The Scheduled Caste children are irregular in

Table - 4.15

Educational Institutions in Jalesar and Awagarh Block

Block	Primary School	Senior School	High School and Intermediate College	College
Jalesar	81	22	3	1
Awagarh	67	18	5	-

Source: Sankhikiya Patrika, Janpad, Etah, (Hindi), 1988, p.78.

higher secondary education in spite of the existence of 8 high schools and intermediate colleges. This has resulted in the increasing percentage of dropouts at the primary stage and senior school level. Out of 8 colleges, 4 intermediate colleges are in the main towns of Jalesar and Awagarh. Improper education coupled with insufficient financial support makes, the Scheduled Caste students reluctant to go for college education. There is only one degree college in Jalesar. Only those who live in the town or adjacent to it continue their higher education. All these factors taken together are instrumental in perpetuating illiteracy of Jalesar, specially among Scheduled Castes.

Political Background of Agra and Jalesar:

Generally the Scheduled Castes are socially, economically and educationally backward in Agra and Jalesar regions. The economic backwardness of the Scheduled Castes is mainly due to their position in the social set up of Hindu society. They form the lowest rung of the Hindu society, where they have been exploited for centuries. They were compelled to become bonded labourers and made to do hard work but they were paid nothing except meagre food. They were made completely depend on the superior strata of the society.

The point to be made is that inspite of all the government policies, there is no significant improvement in their socio-economic condition. The urge and consciousness

for equality is missing. The Scheduled Castes living in rural areas are poor, traditional, less educated and less conscious of their right and dignity in comparison to urban based Scheduled Castes. But, the Scheduled Castes living in urban areas are not concerned about the socio-economic, political and cultural progress of their own brethren living in rural areas.

But, political mobilisation played a role in promoting the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes. After independence, the politics of Agra was dominated by upper castes like Brahmin, Bania, Kayasth, Khatri etc. In the early 1960s the most prominent among the local political leaders were late Shrikrishna Datta Paliwal, Seth Achal Singh, Jagan Prasad Rawat, Bhogilal Mishra and Adiram Singhal. S.K.D. Paliwal was the dominant figure in the local politics and congress party occupied a very important position between 1930 and 1950. In 1927 Paliwal was appointed secretary of UPCC and subsequently its president from 1940-1946. In 1946 he became a cabinet minister for finance and information in the U.P Government. He was associated with Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and J.B. Kripalani. In 1952, Paliwal refused to contest a Lok Sabha seat on the congress ticket and resigned from the party. He thereafter, organised the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP). He contested Lok Sabha election as an independent candidate but he suffered defeat from Seth Achal Singh. Seth Achal Singh not only won the 1952 Lok Sabha election but was continuously

elected to the Lok Sabha from Agra constituency upto 1971 election. Seth Achal Singh belonged to the Jain community and he continued to be an undisputed leader since Agra was overwhelmed with the economic clout of Jains, a powerful merchant class of India.¹⁴

Jagan Prasad, born in a Brahmin family in the village Narkhi located in Agra district, started his political career from Agra college where he was a student of law. He was elected to the Assembly of United Provinces in 1937. He held the office of the parliamentary secretary to Rafi Ahmed Kidwai for a considerable period of time. After 1946 election he became Home Minister in the Government of Uttar Pradesh.¹⁵

After independence, Congress has emerged as the dominant party. Socialists, RPI and Jan Sangh could often challenge the dominance of the Congress Party. In 1952 election Congress won all ten assembly seats. But in the 1957 elections it lost five seats to independent candidates, PSP and Socialist party. Jagan Prasad Rawat a prominent Congress leader was also defeated by S.K.D. Paliwal from Khairagarh rural assembly constituency.

After 1957 election, in Agra three political parties emerged stronger. In 1962 election RPI won three general

14. D.B. Rosenthal, The Limited Elite: Politics and Government in two Indian Cities (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp.30-33.

15. Ibid., p.32.

assembly seats and in 1967, Jan Sangh won three seats and RPI one for assembly from the Agra district. The congress won only four seats in 1962 and three in 1967 elections.

The RPI emerged as a strong opposition in 1959 Municipal Corporation election, the party won 17 seats out of total 54 seats. Out of 17 members, eleven members came from the Jatav community. The RPI dismantled the political hegemony of the congress party which won all the assembly seats in 1952 and five in 1957 elections. In the 1962 election the RPI won three general seats and secured 25.6 per cent of the total polled votes which comes to 4 per cent less than total votes polled by Congress. The RPI candidate to the Lok Sabha Haji Haidar Bax polled 27.9 per cent of the total votes and held the second position in 1962 election. Again, in 1967 election Agra West unreserved seat which was earlier known as Agra city II was retained by Man Singh, a candidate from RPI. The hegemony of the Congress party was challenged since 1957 partly because of its own factionalism and partly due to the emergence of new political parties like RPI and Jan Sangh.¹⁶

The Jatavs, the mainstay of Scheduled Castes in Agra became active in politics even before independence. They started the Jatav movement under the banner of Jatav Men's Association (Jatav Maha Sabha) in 1917. It was purely a caste based organisation. This association succeeded to

16. Ibid.

include their members in state legislative council. In 1920, Bohare Khem Chand was elected to the U.P. legislative council. After few years the organisation was broken into pieces because of internal rivalry and differences involved over the programmes and policies of the party. The break away radical faction formed the "Jatav Pracharaka Sangh" to strive for the upward mobility of the caste in the hierarchical ladder in 1924. "The objective of the organisation was to uplift the caste from the old domain of spinelessness".¹⁷ In 1930, Manik Chand Jatav Vir, Gopi Chand Pippal and Ram Swaroop Sagar organised the 'Jatav Youth League'. In a conference in 1937 in Ghaziabad the name of the organisation was changed to "All India Jatav Youth League" and Gopi Chand Pippal was elected its first president. Pippal had been active in the political life of Jatav community. He was also elected president of Scheduled Caste Federation of Agra unit.

The Jatavs of Agra organised local units of the Scheduled Caste Federation and All India Jatav Youth League. These organisations played a vital role in mobilising Jatavs in the pre-independence period. The political leader like Manik Chand Jatav Vir, Ram Narayan Yadvendu and Gopi Chand Pippal succeeded in gaining recognition of the name "Jatav" for their community officially called Chamar till 1939.

17. M.P.S. Chandal, A Social Force in Politics: a Study of Scheduled Castes of U.P., (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1990), p.5.

The Scheduled Caste Federation was active in Agra region before 1957. After the death of Baba Saheb Bhimarao Ambedkar on December 6, 1956, this organisation was dissolved in compliance with his wish. He had envisioned the formation of RPI which was formally established on October 3, 1957. The Scheduled Caste Federation and All India Jatav Youth League merged with RPI which led to the Jatav domination in the party for quite a long time.

The Republicans were militant opponents of the elite Hindu castes. To oppose the congress, the republicans were willing to seek alliances with any party or individual whose principles were not opposed to their own. Most of the Jatavs of Agra were opposed to the Congress party because they felt that the Congress was controlled by a 'bunch of Brahmin boys'.¹⁸ So as Paul Brass observed, the Republican Party leaders who joined the congress, certainly betrayed the aspirations of the lower castes.¹⁹

The political scene of the Agra till late 1970s was dominated by three parties viz., Congress, RPI and Jan Sangh. After 1970s Congress and BJPs (now BJP) emerged as strong alternatives to each other for political power in Agra.

18. Owen, M. Lynch, "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar - Myth and Charisma" in J.M. Mahar (ed.), The Untouchables in Contemporary India (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1972), p.103.

19. Paul, R. Brass, Factional Politics in an Indian States: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.105.

As regards Jalesar politics, it was also dominated by the higher castes since pre-independence period. The political awareness developed among the people of Jalesar in and through the freedom movement. Since 1921, the people of this area started participating in the non-cooperation movement. The prominent personalities who participated in these agitations were Shri Ram Shastri, Thakur Basudeva Singh and Thakur Saheb Singh. During the Salt Satyagrah of 1930s many congressmen from Jalesar were arrested and jailed. Thakur Saheb Singh of Rajmal village of Jalesar constituency was imprisoned for eight months in the non cooperation movement of 1921 and also in 1930 for six months for joining the salt satyagraha led by Gandhiji. He was appointed vice president of the District Congress Committee.

Unfortunately, no leader from the Scheduled Castes could emerge during the period of freedom struggle, although a large number of them participated in the movement as activists. Khan²⁰ rightly says that the Scheduled Castes had absolutely no access to power in the past, not only because of the absence of any of the facilities and resources which the caste Hindu possessed but also due to their low social status and economic dependence on the caste Hindus. Even the limited franchise, available to the people possessing education and property was denied to the Scheduled Castes. But after 1930s, they were assigned with

20. Mumtaz Ali Khan, Scheduled Castes and their Status in India, (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1980), pp.170-172.

their political right and dignity, consequent to the social movement of Baba Saheb B.R. Ambedkar. They were organised and awakened into life with the most revolutionary philosophy of Ambedkar. In post-independent India the new socio-political and economic order encouraged mobility among them, which was certainly a unique contribution of Ambedkar.

Jalesar was the double member constituency prior to 1961. In 1961 when the double member constituencies were abolished, Jalesar was declared to be reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes. In this constituency, non-Scheduled Caste candidates were elected in 1952 and 1957. Jalesar politics was dominated by Congress party till 1985. But in the new political equation changed in favour of BJP, Congress lost the Assembly elections in 1989 and 1991. Even while Congress was dominant, opposition parties could win this seat in 1962 in 1969 and in 1977 assembly elections. The struggle for political power in Jalesar is mainly between BJP and the Congress.

As regards to the role of the Scheduled Castes in this constituency, the Jatavs played a significant one from 1952-1974. But the assembly elections of 1977 indicated that the Jatavs started losing their grip over Jalesar politics. After the death of Chiranjilal, there was no other prominent Jatav leader equal to his stature who dominated the political scenario of Jalesar and got elected to the U.P assembly for four times from 1952 to 1969 by successfully mobilizing

other castes in his support. Then, other sub-castes among the Scheduled Castes like Nut, Agaria, Dhobi started claiming share in the politics of Jalesar. Most Jatavs of Jalesar constituency are associated with Bahujan Samaj party. But the other sub-castes of Scheduled Castes are supporting the parties like congress, Janta Dal, Samajvadi Janta Party, BJP etc. The BSP at present is trying to mobilise the younger generation of Scheduled Castes in Jalesar.

The higher castes played an important role in the victory of the Scheduled Caste candidates in Jalesar reserved constituency. Ever since independence, the politics of Jalesar reserved constituency is influenced by higher castes. As Joshi observed, the higher caste voters and politicians, in fact, continue to monopolise the reserved constituency. The higher castes are better informed about politics and more astute about protecting their interests. She adds, the higher caste people and the politicians decide the candidature of all the major political parties. The candidate who advocates to protect the interest of the upper caste always wins the election.²¹ The same kind of political role is played by higher caste leaders and voters in Jalesar reserved constituency. During the elections, Scheduled Caste candidates are dependent on higher castes and the rural peasant class comprised of upper and middle castes who

21. Barbara, R. Joshi, Democracy in Search of Equality: Untouchable Politics and Indian Social Change (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation (India) 1982), p.143.

control the economy of the Jalesar. All political activities like campaigning and financial help are being carried out by the higher castes and farmer class in Jalesar. Thus, the Scheduled Caste candidate's victory is determined by the higher caste votes, their manipulations and tricks, coupled with the sheer lack of political consciousness and fluctuating decision making trends among the Scheduled Caste voters and political activists.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS AND MOBILISATION PROCESSES
OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN AGRA

Karl Deutsch¹ revealed in his study, urbanisation leads to social and political mobilisation. Changing social attitudes and aspirations often lead to the mobilisation and assertion which were earlier politically insignificant. Hence, we make an attempt to examine the political mobilisation amongst the Scheduled Castes especially Jatavs of Agra city. It has also been analysed, how far political parties select their candidates from the Scheduled Castes. Moreover, the study tries to look into voting pattern, political rivalry, inter-party and intra-group factionalism etc. amongst the Scheduled Castes in Agra West reserved assembly constituency.

It was the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar which handled the political consciousness of the Scheduled Castes of Agra. In 1956, Dr. Ambedkar visited Agra and addressed a public meeting which impressed the Scheduled Castes who decided to dedicate themselves to the cause espoused by Dr. Ambedkar. It was the aim of Babasaheb to unite the Scheduled Castes in their cause for social and economic equality and in their struggle to safeguard their constitutional rights.

Dr. Ambedkar, while visiting Agra in 1956 called upon the dalits to realise their strength and significance in the region. He reminded them to rise to the occasion as "the reserved seats were only for ten years. They will end

1. Karl W. Deutsch, "Social mobilisation and Political Development, American Political Science Review (1961), Vol.55, pp.493-506.

soon..... In the end you will have to depend upon your own strength".² As a newspaper reported, the eyes of all people ought to be opened to the awakening of the Scheduled Castes, especially the Jatavs who had in large numbers gathered at the Ram Lila grounds to listen to Ambedkar. The public meeting was attended by many. Such large gatherings were not found even in public meetings addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru. About 100,000 were present at the meeting.³

At this meeting, Dr. Ambedkar observed that the Jatavs were the natural leaders of the Scheduled Castes. Dissatisfaction could not be eliminated by blinding one's eyes to it or by buying with a little money those selfish and self-interested leaders who would sell their own caste. It can be eliminated when their true leaders and the youthful Jatavs become united to fight for their rights and make the government believe that their unity is for fulfilling their duty to the Scheduled Castes.⁴ This call by Ambedkar proved to be a major source of inspiration and confidence for the local dalit leaders.

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2. Sainik, March 19, 1956 (Agra). Cited by Owen M. Lynch, Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India (New York: University of Columbia, Press, 1969), p.145.
 3. Sainik, March 20, 1956 (Agra). Cited by Owen M. Lynch, ibid, p.138.
 4. Ibid.

Political Mobilization Among the Jatavs of Agra:

The Jatav Community constituted the predominant majority of the Scheduled Castes of Agra district. The Jatavs of Agra had organised themselves under the banner of Scheduled Caste Federation of Dr. Ambedkar. However, by the 1946 elections, factionalism and mutual rivalry grew among the leaders of the Jatav community. The upper castes and the trading community, whose interests were threatened by the growing political consciousness among the dalits, especially Jatavs, took advantage of this situation. They added fuel to the factionalism and mutual jealousies with the aim of distancing the Jatavs from the Scheduled Caste Federation or to split the Jatav votes by dividing them into different camps.⁵ The Jatavs who were united under the banner of Scheduled Caste Federation did not pose a threat to Congress till 1957. However, the Scheduled Caste Federation's candidate Gopi Chand Pipal, a prominent Jatav leader, had secured 23.9 per cent of the total votes in the 1952 assembly elections in Agra City West general constituency. Mithanlal, a Jatav candidate, contested from Agra City-II double-member assembly constituency for 1957 election on the Scheduled Caste Federation's ticket secured only 20.1 per cent of the total votes. The Congress Party which won the election

5. D.B. Rosenthal, The Limited Elite: Politics and Government in Two Indian Cities (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp.35-36.

nominated Chatrapati Ambesh (Jatav) and P.N. Bibhab, a Bania, for Agra City-II double member constituency as reserved and general seat candidates respectively. While Ambesh (Jatav) received 28.6 per cent, D.N. Bibhab received 27.3 per cent of votes.⁶ This shows that the Jatavs wholeheartedly supported C.P. Ambesh who belonged to their own caste.

After Dr. Ambedkar's death in 1956 as a response to the political system in which the interests of the weaker sections were not realised, the Republican Party of India was organised at all India level. And, a (unit) branch of RPI was also established in Agra in 1958.⁷ For the first time the RPI contested the Agra Municipal Corporation elections in 1959, and won 17 out of fifty four seats. Of the seventeen successful RPI candidates eleven belonged to Jatav caste.⁸ This demonstrated the growing influence of the RPI among the Scheduled Castes. The Jatavs were united under the party with the other Scheduled Castes in Agra and other parts of Uttar Pradesh.

The RPI's election manifesto strongly supported the political mobilization and development of the Scheduled

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6. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, State Elections in India: Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections 1952-85, (Vol.4). The North (Part II), Bihar, Uttar Pradesh (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988), p.303, 361.
 7. Owen M. Lynch, Op. Cit, p.95.
 8. Ibid., p.100.

Castes. The major demands of the party were concerned with improving the socio-economic conditions of the poor and downtrodden in India. A Charter of ten demands was presented to Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. The demands were as follows:⁹

1. The portrait of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, "the Father of the Indian Constitution" must be given a place in the Central Hall of Parliament.
2. Let the land of the Nation go to the actual tiller of the land.
3. Idle and waste land must go to the landless labourers.
4. Adequate distribution of food grains and control over rising prices.
5. The condition of slum dwellers to be improved.
6. Full implementation of Minimum Wage Act, 1948.
7. Extension of all privileges guaranteed by the Constitution to the Scheduled Castes who had adopted Buddhism.
8. Harassment of the Depressed Classes should cease forthwith.

9. Ibid., pp.103-104.

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9. Full justice be done under the Untouchability Act to them.
10. Reservation in the services to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes be completed as soon as possible, not later than 1970.

The tenth resolution in the party Election Manifesto became a subject of debate within the party itself. Through this resolution the Party demanded an end to reserved jobs in the government services for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. While one group of the RPI, the moderates felt that all reservations should be continued for some more time, another group the radicals argued that the political reservation should be abolished. The radicals argued that because of the present system of reservations, Congress 'yes men' were elected from the Scheduled Castes rather than men who would have represented and fought for the real interests of the Scheduled Castes. They also argued that the whole reservation policy should be abolished because that would force the Scheduled Castes to fight for their rights as citizens and rely solely on their own efforts. Further for the radicals the policy of protective discrimination was a trick of the Congress to divide and rule the Scheduled Castes and if it was abolished then the Scheduled Castes would have been forced to unite among themselves for their political

survival.¹⁰ According to the radical Republicans, political reservations were benefitting the political parties and not Scheduled Caste people. They wanted radical change in the society.

The aim of the RPI was to unite all the Scheduled Castes against the Congress Party. The Republican leaders wanted to defeat the Congress Party because they thought that the Congress Party represented higher castes and rich people. The Scheduled Caste members who were elected from the reserved seats, fought for the interests of the political parties to which they belonged, not for causes for the interests of the Scheduled Caste masses.

In 1961, the double-member constituency system was abolished. The Delimitation Commission declared Agra (Rural) a reserved assembly constituency for the Scheduled Castes. The Congress again fielded C.P. Ambesh as its candidate from here in the 1962 elections. The RPI and Jan Sangh also nominated Jatav candidates--Karan Singh Kane and Suraj Bhan Nagar respectively. In this constituency, the Scheduled Castes who were by and large, rural were not organised, and hence political parties could create division among them. C.P. Ambesh (Congress) won the election by defeating Karan Singh Kane of the RPI by a small margin of 2 per cent of the total votes.¹¹

10. Ibid., pp.106-107.

11. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, Op. Cit., p.361.

The causes for the defeat of the RPI candidate were, firstly, the presence of three Jatav candidates in the fray which caused division among the Jatavs and Secondly, the Agra (rural) constituency being a rural one, the RPI did not have a strong hold, its influence was confined to urban areas of Agra city.¹²

On the defeat of RPI candidate, "Sainik" a daily newspaper commented in an editorial that the Congress candidate, C.P. Ambesh won the election from Agra (rural) reserved assembly constituency precisely because of the support of upper castes who felt that they could defeat the RPI candidate by supporting the Congress candidate who also belonged to Jatav caste. Out of the total votes secured by the Congress candidate, seventy per cent votes were secured by using money and muscle power and by playing one group against the other and also by the use of the communal card. Another reason for the defeat of the RPI candidate was the hatred for and opposition of the caste Hindus towards the Republican Party candidates which united them to vote for the Congress candidates en bloc.¹³

But the RPI succeeded in bagging three general assembly seats in Agra district in the 1962 election. Significantly,

12. Owen M. Lynch, Op. cit., p.101.

13. Sainik, May 14, 1962 (Agra) cited by Owen M. Lynch, Op. cit., p.101.

Table 5.1

Votes Received by and the position of RPICandidates in the 1962 Assembly Elections in Agra district

Constituency	Candidate	Votes Received (per cent)	Place
Fatehpur Sikri	Kunwar Sen	21.3	Second
Khairagarh	Bhola Singh	18.5	Third
Etamadpur South	R.K. Verma	24.1	Second
Etamadpur North (SC)	Mewa Ram	17.9	Third
Firozabad	Bagwan Das	20.3	First
Fatehabad	B.L. Bipra	26.8	First
Bah	Ram Sahai	26.8	Second
Agra City-I	P.N. Gupta	24.4	Second
Agra City-II	Khem Chand	34.5	First
Agra (Rural) (SC)	K.S. Kane	40.7	Second

Source: V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, State Elections in India: Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections 1952-1985, (vol.4) The North Part II Bihar, Uttar Pradesh (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988), pp.361-62.

all these RPI candidates elected to the U.P. legislative assembly from general constituencies of Agra district were Jatavs. They were, Bhagwan Das, Banwarilal Bipra and Khem Chand elected respectively from Firozabad, Fatehabad and Agra City-II assembly (general) constituencies. Thus, in 1962

elections the RPI emerged as an alternative political force to the Congress in Agra district. The RPI candidates secured the second largest number of votes in five constituencies and stood in third position in two constituencies (See table 5.1). The RPI activities started affecting the upper castes. P.N. Gupta, a Bania doctor contested the elections from Agra city-I for the U.P. Assembly on the RPI ticket. Although he lost, he secured 24.4 per cent of the total votes and lost by a narrow margin. Balogi Agrawal who won the election as an independent candidate, polled 33.6 per cent of the total votes.¹⁴ In the 1962 elections, B.P. Maurya, a prominent leader of RPI was elected to the Lok Sabha from Aligarh general Lok Sabha constituency. In the election, the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes voted for RPI candidates in Agra region as well as in other parts of U.P.

For the Agra Lok Sabha seat, Haji Haidar Bax contested as an RPI candidate in the 1962 elections. The Congress and the Jan Sangh's nominees were Seth Achal Singh and Raj Nath Kunzru respectively. In this election, Jatavs and Muslims supported the RPI candidates for the Lok Sabha and assembly seats. Rosenthal points out in his study that the campaign was heavily charged with appeals to anti-Muslim sentiments, and rumours were common that the Jan Sangh was anxious to defeat Bax, even if it meant supporting Seth Achal Singh and

14. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, Op.Cit, pp.361-362.

late in the campaign, it began to seek votes unofficially for Seth.¹⁵ The upper caste Hindus reacted against the Jatav-Muslim coalition. A few days before polling, the RPI candidate Haji Haidar Bax appeared set for victory. There were widespread rumours in the last few days of the campaign that the Jan Sangh candidate R.N. Kunjur had withdrawn in favour of the Congress candidate to defeat the RPI candidate.¹⁶ The RPI was more effective than the Congress and Jan Sangh.

The Congress and the Jan Sangh leaders alleged that the Republicans raised "communal" slogans during the election campaigns like,

*"Jatav Muslim Bhai-Bhai,
Hindu Kaum Kahan se aye".¹⁷*

In this context, Man Singh, former RPI M.L.A. in a personal interview with the researcher argued that the Republicans did not raise such slogans. He says that R.S.S. workers have raised slogans like,

*Jatav Muslim Bhai-Bhai,
Baki Kaum Kahan Se aye,
Uski Milkar Karo Pitai.*

15. D.B. Rosenthal, Op. cit., p.221.

16. Amar Ujala, November 6, 1989 (Agra).

17. Amar Ujala, March 27, 1962 (Agra), Cited by Owen Lynch, Op.cit, p.102.

He argued that R.S.S. activists raised this slogan to defeat the RPI candidates and to mobilize Hindu votes in favour of the Jan Sangh candidates.¹⁸

When the Delimitation Commission created new assembly constituencies in 1966 Agra city was divided into three constituencies, viz., Agra East, Agra Cantonment and Agra West. A large part of the Agra West assembly constituency consisted of Jatav mohallas of Agra city and the adjacent rural areas where the upper castes were in a dominant position.

In the 1967 elections, Bhogilal Mishra, was the Congress candidate for the U.P. Assembly elections from Agra West general constituency. In this election, A.P. Sharma contested from the Jan Sangh platform. RPI fielded Man Singh, a prominent leader and a member of the State Election Committee of the party. He was a Jatav by caste. There were two other Jatav candidates fielded by various political groups with the intention of dividing the Jatav votes. The Jan Sangh also adopted such tactics by fielding Sunder Lal Kori as an independent candidate. After a close contest the RPI candidate was elected. Man Singh Jatav of RPI secured 28.8 per cent of the total votes polled. The Congress and Jan Sangh candidates polled 28.5 per cent and 26.7 per cent

18. Interview with former RPI MLA Man Singh, 20 June 1991.

respectively. The independent candidate Sunderlal Kori received only 3.5 per cent of the votes.¹⁹

Man Singh of RPI who won this election, states that he received massive support from the Scheduled Castes and Muslims. He asserts that a Scheduled Caste candidate can get elected from the general constituency if there is only one Scheduled Caste candidate supported by the Scheduled Caste voters wholeheartedly. He argued that from the general constituency many candidates belonging to the upper castes contest the election and hence the upper caste votes get divided and if Scheduled Caste candidate can get the collective support of the Scheduled Caste voters he can get elected from the general constituency. Man Singh opines that political parties use the Scheduled Castes for their own interests; political reservation should be abolished, which will help the Scheduled Castes to unite and back a candidate who can really fight to safeguard their interests. This was the only way, he said, whereby the Scheduled Castes and Tribes could exercise their authority as indicated in the general elections of 1962 and 1967.²⁰

In the 1967 general elections and the 1969 mid-term assembly elections in U.P., the RPI's performance was very

19. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, Op. cit, p.361.

20. Interview with Man Singh, on June 20, 1991.

poor. In Agra district, the RPI received 15.2 per cent votes in 1967 and 10.5 per cent votes in 1969.²¹ The RPI was divided into different groups such as RPI (Khobragade), RPI (Gawai) and RPI (Kamble), etc. Though the RPI (K) contested till the 1980 assembly elections, its performance was poor in all the elections. In the 1974 and the 1977 assembly elections in the Agra West reserved constituency the RPI(K) candidate, A.R. Kishan polled only 4.5 per cent and 2.3 per cent of the total votes respectively, and in 1980, Ranvir Singh Varun received only 7.1 per cent of the total polled votes.²²

Our study indicates that the Scheduled Castes in Agra were politically mobilised mainly under the leadership of RPI and by 1967, the Jatavs of Agra became politically conscious and a force to be reckoned with. By striking a Jatav-Muslim combination, the RPI emerged as an alternative to the Congress in Agra region.

That the RPI was successful in winning elections from the general constituencies was a land mark in the electoral politics of the region. Later, the Congress and other political parties headed by upper castes, used their tactics of playing a politics of divide and rule and used Scheduled

21. Craig Baxter, District Voting Trends in India (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p.347.

22. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, Op. Cit., p.679.

Castes to safeguard their own interests. This resulted in the split of RPI into various groups.

Political Participation of the Scheduled Castes:

In the 1977 Lok Sabha elections, the Janata Party propagated that Jagjivan Ram would become the Prime Minister if the party comes to power. Though the Janata Party secured an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha elections, Jagjivan Ram was denied the Prime Ministership. This antagonised the Jatavs of Agra, and they did not support Janata party unitedly in the subsequent assembly elections and their votes were divided between the Congress and the Janata Party in the 1977 assembly elections. As Table-5.2 indicates in the Agra West reserved assembly constituency out of 40 Jatav voters of our sample 18 (19.56 per cent) voted for the Janata Party and 20 (21.74 per cent) voted for the Congress (I). The other castes such as the Balmiki, the Dhobi and Khatik voted for the Congress (I) candidate. The Koris cast their votes in favour of both the Congress and the Janata Party candidates. Out of 20 Kori voters, 8 (8.69 per cent) voted for the Congress and 12 (13.04 per cent) cast their votes in favour of the Janata Party. The Table 5.2 also shows that out of the 92 Scheduled Caste voters 58 (63.03 per cent) cast their votes in favour of Congress (I). In 1977, Congress candidates were successful in three urban assembly segments of Agra. Anti Janata Party sentiments are clearly visible from the voting pattern.

Table 5.2

Voters' Caste and their Electoral Pattern (1977-1991)
(Agra West Reserved Assembly Constituency)

Party	Jatav	Balmiki	Kori	Dhobi	Khatik	Total votes cast
1977						
Congress	20(21.74)	15(16.30)	8(8.69)	12(13.04)	3 (3.26)	
Janata Party	18(19.56)	-	12(13.04)	-	2(2.17)	92
RPK	2(2.17)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	-	-	-	-	
1980						
Congress	31(30.39)	12(11.76)	11(10.78)	16(15.69)	3 (2.94)	
B.J.P.	15(14.70)	-	4(3.92)	-	-	
RPK	5(4.90)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	-	-	-	5 (4.90)	102
1985						
Congress	38(33.93)	2(1.78)	-	10(8.93)	4 (3.57)	
Janata Party	22(19.64)	-	-	1(0.89)	2 (1.78)	112
B.J.P.	-	-	20(17.86)	-	-	
B.S.P.	2(1.78)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	11(9.82)	-	-	-	
1989						
Congress	33(25.19)	6(4.58)	5(3.82)	8(6.11)	2 (1.53)	131
Janata Dal	2(1.53)	2(1.53)	8(6.11)	1(0.76)	-	
B.J.P.	32(24.43)	7(5.34)	10(7.63)	4(3.05)	-	
B.S.P.	3(2.29)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	-	-	-	8 (6.11)	
1991						
Congress	13(9.35)	2(1.44)	3(2.16)	9(6.47)	1 (0.72)	139
Janata Dal	29(20.86)	4(2.88)	2(1.44)	4(2.88)	2 (1.44)	
B.J.P.	33(23.74)	10(7.19)	10(7.19)	3(2.16)	10 (7.1)	
B.S.P.	3(2.16)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	01(0.72)	-	-	-	

In 1978 during the Janata Party regime in the centre and the state, violent clashes took place between the Jatavs and the upper castes on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on April 14 in Agra city. It is said that the RSS, with the active connivance of Provinces Armed Constabulary, assaulted the Scheduled Castes which resulted in the death of three people. The people demanded judicial enquiry into the incident to bring the guilty to book. But the U.P. Chief Minister did not accept the demands.²³ This further alienated the Jatavs from the Janata Party and they shifted their support to the Congress. This improved the electoral prospects of the Congress in the 1980 assembly elections. The table 5.2 indicates that out of 102 Scheduled Caste voters 73 (71.56 per cent) voted for the Congress candidate Azad Kumar Kardam, and out of 51 Jatav voters 31 (30.39 per cent) cast their votes in favour of Congress candidate. The 12 (11.76 per cent) Balmiki, 11 (10.78 per cent), Kori, 16 (15.69 per cent) Dhobi and 3 (2.94 per cent) Khatik voted for Congress (I). The Table shows that 15 Jatav voters cast their votes in favour of the BJP candidate Karan Singh Verma. In the 1980 assembly elections, the Jatavs supported Congress, BJP and RPI (K). The Congress, BJP and

23. Zoya Hasan, Dominance and Mobilisation: Rural Politics in Western Uttar Pradesh 1930-1980 (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989), p.159.

RPI (K) candidates received 46.3 per cent, 29.4 per cent and 7.1 per cent of the total votes respectively.²⁴

Azad Kumar Kardam was not able to get the Congress (I) ticket from Agra West reserved assembly constituency in the 1985 elections. The party nominated Verendra Sone who was a Jatav by caste. The Janata party's nominee was Ramjilal Suman who also belonged to the Jatav community. On the other hand, the BJP nominated Roshan Lal Mahore who belonged to the Kori community. The electoral strategy of BJP was aimed at securing Kori caste votes which constituted a sizeable section of the voters in Agra West reserved assembly constituency. The BJP candidate received 20.08 per cent of the total votes, while the Congress and Janata Party candidates secured 45.58 per cent and 33.06 per cent of total votes respectively.²⁵

As table 5.2 indicates out of 112 Scheduled Caste voters 54 (53.13 per cent) voted for the Congress, 25(22.31 per cent) cast their votes in favour of Janata Party candidate Ramjilal Suman, 20 (17.86 per cent) voted for BJP, 11 (9.82 per cent) voted independent candidates and only 2 (1.78 per cent) cast their votes in favour of BSP in 1985 election.

24. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, Op. cit, p.678.

25. Ibid., p.679.

In the 1985 assembly election out of 62 Jatav voters, 38 (33.93 per cent) voted for Congress and 22 (19.64 per cent) for Janata party. Significantly, all the 20 Kori voters cast their votes in favour of BJP candidate Roshan Lal Mahore who belonged to the same community. The Dhobi and the Khatik votes were divided between the Congress and the Janata Party. A majority of Balmiki voters supported independent candidate Indrajit who was a Balmiki by caste. Out of 13 Balmiki voters, 11 voted for independent candidate. The Balmikis alleged that the Congress neglected the Balmiki caste in Agra. So they took a collective decision to support independent Balmiki candidates in the Agra Contonment general and Agra West reserved Assembly constituencies²⁶. Thus, it can be seen that caste is playing an important role in electoral politics. The Koris and Balmikis cast their votes in favour of their respective caste candidates, Roshan Lal Mahore and Indrajit.

In 1989 elections, there was an electoral alliance between the Janata Dal and the BJP. Ajay Singh contested election from the Agra Lok Sabha seat and the BJP decided to contest election in the three urban assembly segments. In this election Congress nominated District Congress - I Committee President Azad Kumar Kardam, for the Agra West reserved assembly constituency, while Kishan Gopal, Deputy

26. Amar Ujala, 15 Feb 1985 (Agra).

Mayor of Agra Municipal Corporation, secured the B.J.P. ticket. In this election the Scheduled Castes were divided between the two major political parties i.e. the Congress (I) and B.J.P.

As table 5.2 indicates, out of 112 Scheduled Caste voters 54 (41.23 per cent) cast their votes in favour of Congress and 53 (40.45 per cent) voted for the B.J.P. The Jatav votes were also divided between the Congress and BJP. Out of 70 Jatav voters. 33 (25.19 per cent) supported Congress and 32 (24.43 per cent) voted for BJP. The Balmikis were divided between the Congress and the B.J.P. The Janata Dal candidate Ashok Kautia who was a Kori, could not withdraw his candidature from the election office. His name appeared in the ballot paper. In this election the votes of Koris were divided between the Congress, Janata Dal and B.J.P. The Koris did not know that Kautia was not an official Janata Dal candidate. Though the Dhobis usually supported Congress Party, this time they were divided between the Congress and the BJP.

Ramjilal Chanchal who claimed that he was a Congress man also contested for the U.P. Legislative Assembly as an independent candidate from the Agra West reserved constituency in 1989. He belonged to the Khatik community. Most of the Khatiks supported him. Out of 11 Khatik voters of our sample 8 cast their votes in support of Ramjilal

Chanchal. However, B.J.P. candidate Kishan Gopal won the election by securing 46.53 per cent of total polled votes, while the Congress (I) candidate A.K. Kardam received 33.19 per cent votes.²⁷

In 1991 election the Congress was virtually routed and the Janata Dal and SJP were marginalised. The B.J.P. for the first time secured absolute majority in the UP assembly along with large number of Lok Sabha seats in the state. The BJP nominee secured victory in the Agra Lok Sabha seat along with three urban assembly seats. In the Agra West reserved seat Kishan Gopal, the BJP nominee was successful, who secured 51.54 per cent of the total votes. Gulab Sehera, the Congress candidate lost the election along with the security deposit. He could get only 16.18 per cent of the total votes. The Janata Dal candidate fared better compared to Congress. Its candidate Suresh Chand Soni received 24.21 per cent of the total votes.²⁸

In this election, the Scheduled Caste votes were divided between Congress, Janata Dal and BJP. They did not support any particular party unitedly. The table 5.2 shows that out of 139 Scheduled Caste votes, 28 went to Congress(I), 41 to Janata Dal and 66 to BJP. As regards the voting pattern of the Jatav caste, they were divided between

27. Amar Ujala, November 28, 1989 (Agra).

28. Dainik Jagran, June 19, 1991 (Agra).

the Congress, BJP and Janata Dal. While 29 (20.86 per cent) Jatavs voted for Janata Dal, 33 (33.74 per cent) favoured BJP and 13 (9.35 per cent) the Congress. The other castes such as Balmiki, Dhobi and Khatik also did not support any particular party and their votes were divided between the BJP and Janata Dal.

Thus, it is clear that the Jatav votes were mainly divided between the Janata Dal, BJP and Congress. While the other castes such as Khatik, Dhobi, Kori, Balmiki etc. voted for either Congress or BJP. Interestingly the Kori and Khatik voters preferred to vote for the candidate who belonged to their own caste.

Caste plays a crucial role in the electoral politics. The favourable caste equation is a key to the success in the elections. This is evident from our field study and sample survey. Table 5.3 indicates, out of the 160 respondents 34 (21.25 per cent) opined that caste plays a crucial role in determining electoral outcome.

The Jatavs are numerically superior in this constituency, a Jatav candidate stands fair chances of success. If he can mobilize *en bloc* support of his caste group, while the candidates belonging to other castes such as Balmiki, Kori, Khatik etc. are placed in an unfavourable situation. Ever since independence the candidates belonging to these castes were mostly defeated from this reserved

constituency because of their numerically inferior position. Thus, caste support becomes an important factor for a Scheduled Caste candidate to win the election from the reserved constituency like Agra West. It was this point that has been underscored by the respondents who said that caste support played a vital role in the success of a Scheduled Caste candidate.

Table - 5.3

The Factors responsible for the Electoral Success from
Agra West Assembly Constituency

Factors	Respondents	Per cent
Party support	33	20.62
Non-SC support	31	19.38
Caste support	34	21.25
Economic support	28	17.50
Do Not Know	34	21.25
Total	160	100.00

Financial resources also play a key role in the elections. Since the elections are so expensive, no Scheduled Caste candidate at his own can bear the expenses of the campaign. If the Scheduled Caste candidate does not have good amount of money with him, he cannot win the election easily. In these days, money plays an important role in

mobilising the voters. 28 (17.5 per cent) respondents felt that economic support plays an important role. Almost all of the respondents opined that the Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved constituencies depend on political parties and the upper castes for financial support. It is clear from the table 5.3 that the support of political parties and the upper castes are also important factors for the success of a Scheduled Caste candidate from the Agra West reserved assembly constituency.

Table 5.4
Participation of the Scheduled Castes in the
Political Activities

Activities	Respondents	Per cent
Campaigning	35	21.87
Discussion	15	9.38
Demonstration	29	18.12
Attending meeting	22	13.75
Do not know	59	36.87
Total	160	100.00

The Scheduled Castes of Agra City are highly mobilized as compared to the Scheduled Castes of the rural areas. In Agra the Scheduled Castes participate actively in the elections and other political activities. The Table 5.4

shows that out of 160 respondents, 101 participated in political activities during the elections, and 35 (21.87 per cent) respondents participated in the election campaigns, 15 (9.38 per cent) in discussions, 29 (18.12 per cent) in demonstrations, and 22 (13.75 per cent) attended election meetings.

During our field study and sample survey we found that the people belonging to Jatav caste were actively mobilised. They vigorously participated in the election campaign and related political activities. But the other sub-castes among the Scheduled Castes who are numerically inferior compared to the Jatavs are very indifferent to the electoral activities. They are active only to the extent of casting their votes to the candidate of their own choice. The Jatavs who are dominant in the local politics, have captured various important positions in the political parties organizational structure. A.K. Kardam is President of the District Congress Committee (I). Gulab Sehera is Vice-President of the UP Congress(I), Committee.

Political factionalism among the Jatavs of Agra:

After the split of RPI into different groups, the Congress (I) emerged as a strong political force in Agra. It won all the three assembly seats in Agra city in the 1974 and 1977 elections. Since the Agra West assembly constituency

was declared reserved for Scheduled Castes in 1974, Gulab Sehra, a Jatav, was elected to the U.P. legislative assembly in 1974 and 1977 elections. Gulab Sehra claimed that he was supported by the Jatavs and the upper castes. He says that Jatavs shifted to the Congress since 1970. Sehra emerged as the unchallenged leader of the local Congress till 1977. He was elected as opposition leader in the U.P. legislative assembly after the 1977 elections.²⁹

The leadership of Gulab Sehra was challenged by Azad Kumar Kardam in the 1980 assembly election. Kardam emerged as a prominent leader among the Jatavs as well as in the Congress (I). He was a close confidante of the late Sanjay Gandhi. Kardam said that he was imprisoned seventeen times in the Agra jail and three times in Tihar jail with Sanjay Gandhi.³⁰ The Congress top leadership nominated Kardam from Agra West reserved assembly constituency to cut short the growing influence of Gulab Sehra. Sehra was given the Congress ticket from Tundla rural reserved assembly constituency in the 1980 assembly election. Both Kardam and Sehra won the elections from their respective constituencies. Gulab Sehra became a Minister in the U.P. Government but

29. Interview with Gulab Sehra, former minister of U.P. Government, on June 23, 1991.

30. Interview with Azad Kumar Kardam, former M.L.A. of Congress(I), on June 27, 91. At present he is President of District Congress-I Committee, Agra.

Kardam was denied such a position. As a result, factionalism grew within the Congress in Agra owing to the dissatisfaction of Kardam faction. The Congress factionalism in Agra emerged from mutual jealousies and the urge for political power and was not ideological.

The factionalism and intra-group rivalry comes to surface during the time of elections and distribution of party tickets for the assembly and Lok Sabha. In Agra West constituency, both Gulab Sehra and Azad Kardam factions compete each other for securing the seat for themselves. One group always attempts to put down the other. The fact that the Congress Party in Agra has two Scheduled Caste leaders who dominate the political scene indicates the extent of political mobilization and keen competition among the Scheduled Castes to secure power and prestige. This situation is quite different from Jalesar where there is little competition in the reserved constituency.

Whenever there were differences among these two leaders or if one group was deprived of party ticket, the other group would campaign against the official Congress candidates thus helping the opposition candidates. This is evident from the study of the 1985 and 1989 assembly elections in Agra West constituency. Azad Kumar Kardam campaigned against the Congress candidate Verendra Sone in 1985 and also Verendra Sone in turn campaigned against the official Congress

candidate Azad Kumar Kardam in 1989. In 1989 elections. Verendra Sone attempted to divide the Jatav votes among Jatav candidates like Kishan Gopal (B.J.P.) and Baij Nath of BSP. Kardam alleged that Sone campaigned for the B.J.P. candidate, and that was the reason for the B.J.P. candidate's success in the 1989 election.³¹ Political factionalism was prevalent in other political parties also. Suresh Chand, a Janata Dal leader stated that he lost the 1991 assembly election from Agra West reserved constituency because of factionalism within the party. He cites an example that Jasram Tamoli, Durga Prasad Deshmukh, Vinod Kumari alias Anita, etc. contested election against him as independent candidates, though they were all Janata Dal members. He added that they tried to get a Janata Dal ticket, but could not succeed. Soni says that they campaigned against him in the elections with the sole motive of defeating him.³² Overall, the Jatavs of Agra are not united, elections are competitive and political aspirations among the Scheduled Castes are very high. And with the absence of unity among the Scheduled Castes of Agra they always fall prey to the machinations of the political parties keeping them a divided lot and thus they always fail to send their genuine representatives to the legislative bodies.

31. Interview with A.K. Kardam, on June 27, 1991.

32. Interview with Suresh Chand Soni on July 3, 1991.

Selection of the Scheduled Caste Candidates:

It is observed that Scheduled Caste candidates are selected by the party organisation. In this context C.P. Ambesh stated that party selects candidates on the basis of their involvement in the party activities and commitment to the organization and party ideology. As regards his own candidature in assembly and Lok Sabha elections he says that he belonged to the Seth Achal Singh's group and because of his support he was nominated as Congress candidate. He claims that he did not act as a "yes-man" of the upper castes. He was opposed by A.R. Singhal, a prominent Congress leader in the 1960s. This procedure of selecting the candidates by party organisations often results in the inexperienced and irresponsible people and outsiders getting selected. Ambesh cited of the example of Shiv Narayan Gautam, who had no experience of politics, even though, he was nominated by the Janata Dal for the Firozabad reserved Lok Sabha seat in the 1991 elections because he is a close supporter of the former Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan.³³

C.P. Ambesh also cited the example of Gulab Sehra and Khishan Gopal who contested elections on Congress and B.J.P. tickets respectively for assembly elections from Agra West reserved Constituency. He is of the opinion that Gulab Sehra

33. Interview with former Lok Sabha Member, C.P. Ambesh on July 15, 1991.

and Khishan Gopal do not have a sense of responsibility to their own people. He charged that they were "yes-men" of their respective parties and it was for this reason that the Congress (I) sponsored Gulab Sehra since 1974 to 1991 assembly elections and B.J.P. sponsored Kishan Gopal in 1989 and 1991 assembly elections from Agra West constituency. He adds that Kishan Gopal neither has any base in the party nor among the Scheduled Castes and Gulab Sehra belonged to a wealthy family and so he was able to bear the expenses of election campaigns.³⁴

Numerical strength of a caste group is also counted by the parties at the time of selection of candidates. Vinod Kumari alias Anita, a prominent figure among the Balmikis, who contested the 1991 assembly election from Agra West reserved seat as an independent candidate, opines that political parties always opened for those whose caste is numerically superior in the society of the reserved constituency. She also emphasised that none of the political parties gave a ticket to a Balmiki from the Agra West reserved assembly seat precisely because their population is less in the constituency. Generally, all the political parties preferred a Jatav candidate as Jatavs form a very large section of the population.³⁵ In this context B.S.

34. Ibid.

35. Interview with Vinod Kumari on July 8, 1991.

Rawat argued that if the party nominated a Balmiki candidate, he cannot win the election because Balmikis are numerically much smaller than the Jatavs.³⁶

Man Singh is of the opinion that political parties and the upper caste leaders are against the development of the Scheduled Caste leadership. He cited an example. When he was contesting the Lok Sabha election in 1984 from Agra Lok Sabha seat as a BSP candidate, the upper caste leaders fielded Scheduled Caste candidates against him to divide the Scheduled Caste votes. Further, he adds that, had there been no Scheduled Caste candidates against him in 1984 election for the Lok Sabha, he would have won the elections.³⁷

Thus, it is clear that even in reserved constituencies, the Scheduled Caste candidates are sponsored by the political parties in the areas where Scheduled Castes are in a majority. This has resulted in blocking the process of the development of leadership qualities within the community.

Political Factions Among the Scheduled Castes of Agra:

Intra-group rivalry and political factionalism is deep rooted not only among the Jatavs but also among the other sub-castes of the Scheduled Castes. This tendency has

36. Interview with B.S. Rai at BJP, MP from Agra on July 11, 1991.

37. Interview with Man Singh, on June 20, 1991.

developed because of the lust for power and prestige and manoeuvring by upper castes. In Agra West reserved constituency, intra caste rivalry, groupism and the formation of hostile camps of different individuals is seen during election times. Even in normal time, there are undertones of hatred and hostility among the Scheduled Castes.

Since the Kori, Balmiki, Khatik, Sub-Castes are socially, economically and politically more backward than the Jatav community, they always have the nagging fear that their political and economic interests are at a threat by the superiority of the Jatavs. They believe that Jatavs in the area are very influential and they are being denied chances of social, economic and political development. The Scheduled Castes belonging to other Sub-castes other than the Jatavs do not have a share in the decision-making process in all the political parties because, unlike the Jatavs, they have no strong leadership of their own who can secure a ticket or represent their interests. Seen from a historical perspective, the traditional occupations of these caste groups played a decisive role in their socio-economic backwardness. The unskilled nature of their occupations prevented their occupational mobility. As the social conditions did not allow them to search for alternative jobs, they remained entangled within the old of their traditional occupation. But in the case of Jatavs whose traditional occupation was to work with the leather, they had ample scope

for developing their labour skill with the development of leather industry. This helped them to mitigate their economic backwardness to a considerable extent. And with the progress in their economy, the Jatavs gradually could avail themselves of the educational facilities. On the contrary, the traditional occupation of Balmikis and other sub-caste groups prevented them from getting education. As it is education which acts as a spring board for leaping into progress in every sphere of life the lack of it confirmed these sub-caste groups to their present socio-economic backwardness.

Another factor responsible for the Subordination of certain Scheduled Caste groups to certain others is the severity of caste system. The traditional occupation of Balmikis is removing night soil. This makes them completely untouchable because in the caste system the idea of purity and pollution is thought to be of supreme importance. The other Scheduled Castes do not want to mix up with them because they consider them, unclean. This isolation at the hands of other Scheduled Castes could be the reason for the Balmikis' non-acceptance of the leadership of Jatavs and others. Since the Jatavs remained loyal to the political movement under the militant leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, they became more and more assertive and consolidated their position in the political system. Therefore, one can infer that feeling of backwardness and forwardness among the Jatavs

and Balmikis resulted in their mutual rivalry and caste antagonism against each other.

As an example for Balmikis' submissiveness to the upper castes, C.P. Ambesh pointed out the case of Shiv Charanlal, a Balmiki by caste, who defeated him in the 1967 Lok Sabha Election in the Firozabad reserved constituency. The reason for the defeat, according to C.P. Ambesh, was Shiv Charanlal who used to touch the feet of upper castes at the time of elections and he used to say humbly that 'he has cleaned the Vidhan Sabha and now he wants to clean Lok Sabha'. During his election campaign, Shiv Charanlal said that Chatrapati is "*Kshatriyo Ke Pati Hei*". He asked the upper castes whether they wanted to vote for a Kshatriya or a Bhangi. Ambesh said that he did not bow before the upper castes, so the upper castes supported Shiv Charanlal. Ambesh asserts that Jatav community never bowed before the upper castes merely for the sake of votes. They are continuously struggling on their own to safeguard the interests of the dalits.³⁸

The emergence of factionalism among the Scheduled Castes cost dearly for them organisationally and politically. The fate of RPI can be cited as an excellent example. The RPI, which was an offshoot of the erstwhile Scheduled Caste Federation was considered as a strong political force in the

38. Interview with C.P. Ambesh, July 15, 1991.

Agra district. It had demonstrated its strength in the 1962 elections. Later when factionalism, emerged the party organization started collapsing. The lust for power and prestige and intra-group rivalry proved to be detrimental to the political unity of the Scheduled Castes in general and the Jatavs of Agra in particular. The Bahujan Samaj Party too could not escape from this malady. The BSP is also considered as a party of Jatavs or chamars in U.P. as well as in Agra. The other sub-castes of Scheduled Castes like Dhobi, Kori, Khatik, etc. generally do not support the BSP. The compromising role of the leadership was also instrumental for factionalism and disintegration of these parties.

Our discussion leads us to the conclusion that in Agra West reserved constituency, factional politics within the political parties has divided the Scheduled Castes into several political groups. These groups rather than operating as real political factions often have individualistic and communal attitudes towards the political issues.

Though the Scheduled Castes of this constituency, especially the Jatavs, are more politically conscious compared to other parts of U.P. because of the influence of the dalit movements initiated by Dr. Ambedkar later on they had to succumb to internal conflicts and pretty feuds between and within the various sub-caste groups. That is why they had to witness the disintegration of their cherished

organisations like RPI which once became the second largest political force in Agra in 1962. The upper caste interests have always been victorious in their stratagems of dividing the Scheduled Castes. Historically, the groupism among the Scheduled Caste community has its roots in the caste system of Hindu religion. The traditional occupations played a vital role in preventing most of the communities from acquiring education and this led to their present condition of backwardness. Only the Jatav community could significantly transcend this stagnancy in their mobility in the economic and political sphere. And this disparity among Scheduled Castes in their level of socio-economic and political development caused jealousy and hatred among them. The lack of a conscious and sincere leadership and the readiness of the majority of their political leaders to succumb to the lure of the upper castes are some of the major hurdles confronted by the Scheduled Castes in their search for a way out from their present unenviable conditions. Unless the Scheduled Castes are united as a political force they will not be able to exercise their democratic rights and realise their political aspirations. Instead, they will always be falling prey to the machinations of various political parties controlled by the upper castes.

CHAPTER VI

**POLITICS AND MOBILISATION PROCESSES
OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN JALESAR**

In this chapter, we make an attempt to analyse the political mobility of the Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved assembly constituency and discuss the nature of Scheduled Castes participation in electoral politics in the face of upper caste dominance in the local politics of the Jalesar. The nomination process of Scheduled Caste candidates, political and caste alignment, techniques of political mobilisation, nature of bargaining and the consequences of their dependence on non-Scheduled Caste voters and political leaders is also under the purview of our study.

A significant aspect of the politics of the Jalesar assembly constituency is that even after independence the political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes has not yet reached the level where they could decide the politics of their constituency on their own. Upper castes still play a dominant role in the local politics of the Jalesar assembly constituency even today since they are the ones who determine the shape and nature of politics and other related activities in the constituency. There is a low level of participation and mobilisation among the Scheduled Castes compared to the higher castes. Even though only the Scheduled Castes can contest elections, the politics of the constituency is dominated by upper caste politicians and voters. The Scheduled Caste candidates contesting from reserved

constituencies have to face various problems such as lack of funds, inefficient propaganda machinery, and volunteers who are in expert at handling elections. Though the Scheduled Caste candidates contesting election from a reserved constituency are fielded by political parties, the political parties nominate only those who are committed to party work or who are capable of winning the election on the basis of caste equations and resourcefulness. Because of these factors, the candidates contesting election on the party tickets need not necessarily stand up for the cause of Scheduled Castes.

The politics of Jalesar constituency is dominated by a few land-owning elite caste groups, like the Brahmin and the Thakur. The Brahmins are traditionally engaged in sacerdotal functions and the Thakurs are a landowning group. Their land dominance has always influenced the politics of the State and Jalesar constituency is no exception. The Backward Classes and the Scheduled Castes are mainly peasant proprietors and landless agricultural labourers. The Scheduled Castes work in the fields of upper castes. With the advent of the British rule, the Upper castes were the first community to take advantage of increasing education and they slowly shifted to urban areas, taking up the Government and quasi-Government jobs. After the 50s, the upper castes either sold their land or gave it on contract to the Yadavs and the Lodhs. The only result of this change is that, earlier the Scheduled Castes

were working on Thakurs' land, and now they are working in the fields of Yadavs and the Lodhs'. The upper castes still maintain their economic superiority, and play a dominant role in the local politics at the time of elections. Any one who is contesting election for the Lok Sabha or assembly is entirely dependent on the mercy of the landlords for winning the elections. In return, a Scheduled Caste MLA or MP renders his help to the upper castes. During our personal interview, an eminent leader, Tursanpal Singh said; "the people of this constituency are illiterate and they are not politically conscious. In order to help these illiterate groups, we (Thakurs) come and campaign for Scheduled Caste candidates. The Scheduled Castes are divided during the election. We (Thakurs) take this chance to help a particular Scheduled Caste candidate who could help us after the election".¹

Political and Caste Alignments:

The alignment of different caste groups are reflected during the elections. Among the upper castes, the Brahmins and the Thakurs constitute a powerful group, but they are opposed to each other. The second major group is comprised of Backward Castes, notably the Yadavs, the Lodhs etc. They are politically conscious and play a vital role. They do

1. Interview with Tursanpal Singh on September 4, 1991, who is B.J.P. local leader and contested assembly elections in 1952 and 1957 from Jalesar double-member constituency on Jan Sangh ticket.

political campaigning and give financial support to the Scheduled Caste candidates in the elections. In the 1985 assembly election, the Yadavs and Lodhs supported the Congress (I) candidate. On the other hand, in 1991 election, Lodhs shifted to BJP because of Chief Minister Kalyan Singh who also belong to Lodh caste and Yadavs joined hands with Mulayam Singh Yadav. The Yadavs do not make an alignment with the BJP. The Scheduled Castes are dependent on the upper castes for financial support and political activities. They make alignments with either the Thakurs or the Brahmins.

With respect to their alignment with the Upper Castes, there are divisions among the Scheduled Castes. While the Nuts, Agarias and Dhobis make an alignment with the Thakurs, the Jatavs generally do not bow before the upper castes. Since 1977, during the elections, they were raising slogans on caste lines like "Vote for Jatav", "Jatavs should unite to fight against Thakur dominance" etc. That, they have lost the election since 1977 is illustrative of the point that without depending on Upper Castes no Scheduled Caste candidate can win the elections.

The Brahmins and the Thakurs do not come together to support a particular Scheduled Caste candidate. But in 1991 election, some Brahmins shifted support to the BJP. There was an alignment between one community of Scheduled Castes and the Thakurs. The Brahmin leaders usually make an

agreement with another sub-caste of Scheduled Caste community. Once a person from this sub-caste is elected as an MLA, he would often work for the Brahmin community.

But the Jatavs do not mobilise the political support of the upper castes. Late Chiranjilal (Jatav) was the key leader of Scheduled Caste community. He was not defeated in the elections. But after his death, the Jatav community continued to be neutral. At the same time, the Thakurs did not like the Jatavs standing independently. They wanted their traditional superiority to continue. They knew that once the Jatavs got elected, they will not work for the Thakur community. After the 1974 assembly election, no candidate was selected from the Jatav community by the Thakurs. In 1977 election, Madhaw (Nut) received full support from the Thakurs. Again in the 1980 election, there was an agreement between the Agaria and the Thakurs. It was assumed that once the Agaria candidate got elected, he would support the Thakurs, and all the work of MLA would be done by the Thakurs. Again in 1985, the Dhobi candidate was given the Congress (I) ticket. In Jalesar constituency, for winning the elections, affiliation with any political party was of secondary importance. The primary consideration was which particular community is supported by the Thakur families. Whoever got Thakurs' support, was sure to be elected.

Hereditary Dominance in Politics:

During pre-independence period, Jalesar constituency was dominated by the Thakurs, who constituted 15 per cent of the total population of the Hindus.² There are 32 different Thakur clans. Among these, Chauhans have a prominent place. They are the descendants of the late King Prithviraj of Delhi. According to historians, King Sangathdev had 21 sons. Some of them came to Etah district and conquered the Brahmins. Son after son continued to embrace the institution of Kingship in Etah. There were mainly two kingdoms in Etah district. Awagarh and Ummargarh, Thakur Bijay Singh of the first Jadon clan of Awagarh who had helped the Governor of Jalesar was in the latter's good books. The Governor gave him a huge village named, Misa. In the same way, another king Bakht Singh, in his rule, occupied 53 villages of Awagarh. Before the emergence of the British rule, he exercised his authority over 57 villages. Thakurs' dominance over these villages continued even in the post-Independence era. Even after disappearance of the monarchy system the local people of Jalesar have respect for the Thakurs.

The Scheduled Castes work in Thakurs' fields. They are very much obliged to their "master", the landlords. In fact, the Thakurs are still called Raja of Awagarh. There still

2. E.R. Neave, Etah: A Gazetteer (Allahabad: Government Press United Provinces 1911), p.74.

exist a "King and People" relationship in many parts of Jalesar between the Thakurs and Scheduled Castes.. Illiteracy and poverty have made the Scheduled Castes of Jalesar dependent on the Thakurs. During the British rule, the Thakurs received their education in English schools. The Scheduled Castes who were economically deprived were also deprived from the privilege of education. However, a few of them could get education in ordinary schools. Even after the Land Ceiling Act, the land in these areas are still largely under the possession of the Thakurs. The Thakurs of this region are socially and politically advanced.

At present, the Thakur community is divided into two groups, one led by Jitendrapal Singh and another by Tursanpal Singh. Each group wants to influence the major political party. In 1985 Assembly elections, Jitendrapal Singh's group supported the Congress (I) candidate. Jitendrapal Singh today is a respectable person of this area. If he goes to any village for campaigning during the election, the village people welcome him. Since Jitendrapal Singh supported Congress (I), about 50 per cent of the Thakurs and other castes supported the same party and its candidates in that election. People in this area think that since 'Raja Saheb' is supporting Congress (I), they too must support the Congress (I). It is a feudal loyalty, an outcome of imposed superiority. Tursanpal Singh is also a prominent leader of

the Thakur community. He supported the BJP candidate in elections and mobilised his caste people in favour of BJP. The Scheduled Castes of this constituency are dependent on the royal families in the socio-political spheres.

Electoral Factors of Mobilisation:

In the Jalesar constituency as in any other reserved constituency, the upper castes are responsible for getting the Scheduled Caste candidates elected. The selection of candidates is of utmost importance for political parties and the dominant castes of the constituency. Among all the procedures that make up the final electoral process, to quote Ramashray, "the selection of candidates to various political positions is most important. The distribution of ticket is decided by upper caste leaders".³

A number of socio-economic factors are responsible for the dependence of the Scheduled Castes on the Upper Castes in the political sphere. The Scheduled Castes are economically not sound enough to carry on political activities on their own. The upper castes who are at the top of the social hierarchy, and are economically well off, assure financial support to Scheduled Castes for electoral politics. The financial support given to the Scheduled Castes is one of the most influential factors in the Scheduled Caste politics in

3. Ramashray Roy, "Selection of Congress Candidates-I", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.I, 1966, p.833.

the Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. Money is a source of power in politics, while the other people have money, the Scheduled Castes do not. In a reserved constituency, campaigns often cost much less than campaigns in neighbouring general constituencies. Because the Scheduled Caste candidates, generally do not have the funds to conduct more extensive campaigns their campaigns are less effective. They could reach only fewer voters, especially in the sprawling rural constituencies.⁴ Owing to the penetration of sub-caste oriented politicisation of the local Scheduled Castes, it has become necessary to rely on the upper caste votes for winning the Jalesar reserved seat. Ram Khilari, a local S.J.P. leader points out that Scheduled Castes are divided in various groups and hence do not support a candidate unitedly. He also stated that for the betterment of Scheduled Castes and to protect their legitimate interests they should unite and elect a responsible candidate and participate in the electoral process actively. In his view, if the Scheduled Castes are united then upper castes would not be able to influence the electoral outcome.⁵ But Ram Khilari's

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4. Barbara R. Joshi, Democracy in search of equality: Untouchable politics and Indian Social Change (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1982), p.16.
 5. Interview with Ram Khilari on September 8, 1991. Ram Khilari contested election in 1991 on SJP ticket from Jalesar reserved constituency but he lost the election.

assertion can be particularly challenged in the non-Scheduled Caste dominated reserved constituencies.

Mahendra Pal Singh argued that a candidate gets elected even if he does not possess leadership qualities as he has the support of upper castes. He cited the example of Madhaw who won elections on BJP ticket in 1989 and 1991 assembly elections. Madhaw did not have his base in the constituency yet he won the elections with the support of his party and the non-Scheduled Caste voters, especially Thakurs.⁶ Similarly, Ram Das also feels that the non-Scheduled Caste -- leaders and voters play the most important and decisive role in Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. The Jalesar constituency has a sizeable population of non-Scheduled Caste votes and hence this support is crucial to win the elections. He says that he lost the 1991 assembly elections because he did not get support from the upper castes, especially the Thakurs and Brahmins.⁷ Since the Takurs are anti-Jatav and anti-reservationist, no Jatav candidate could win the election since 1977.

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6. Interview with Mahendra Pal Singh on September 12, 1991. He contested elections in 1985, 1989 and 1991 on BSP ticket but he could not win the election.
 7. Interview with Ram Das on September 16, 1991. He was the Janata Dal candidate in 1991 assembly elections from Jalesar reserved constituency.

Table - 6.1

The Factors Responsible for the electoral success in
Jalesar Reserved Assembly Constituency

Factors	Respondents	per cent
Party support	40	25.00
Non-SC support	45	28.12
Caste support	23	14.37
Economic support	33	20.63
Do not know	19	11.38
Total	160	100.00

The support of a political party is as important as the support of the non-Scheduled Castes. Table - 6.1 indicates that out of 160 respondents 40 (25 per cent) considered party support as the most important factor for electoral success of a Scheduled Caste candidate in Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. In this context, Madhaw says that he won three assembly elections because he was represented the powerful party, BJP. To prove this point he cited the example of Mahendra Pal Singh who contested three assembly elections from Jalesar reserved assembly constituency on the BSP ticket and who could not succeed. He is of the opinion that the BSP is neither a powerful political party at the state or central level nor in the constituency.⁸

8. Interview with BJP MLA, Madhaw on September 21, 1991.

Financial resources also play a key role in elections. Out of the 160 respondents of our survey, 33 (20.63 per cent) stated that financial resource is the important factor in determining the electoral victory of a Scheduled Caste candidate from Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. The Scheduled Castes are socially and economically backward and politically segmented. So, nowadays it has become impossible for them to win the election at their own. In this context, Ram Das says that since the election campaign is quite expensive, the candidates contesting the election cannot afford to invest a huge amount of money from his own resources. They depend on the upper castes for financial support.⁹

The caste support does not play an important role in the electoral success of a Scheduled Caste from Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. Out of our 160 respondents only 23 (14.37 per cent) said that caste support is an important factor for winning the election from Jalesar reserved seat. The Scheduled Castes are not a homogeneous group; they are divided into numerous sub-castes which lead to multiple loyalties. To which sub-caste candidate belongs becomes very crucial in such a situation.

This division of the Scheduled Castes into sub-castes and the conflicts among them, compels a Scheduled Caste

9. Interview with Ram das on September 16, 1991.

candidate to seek the support of non-Scheduled Caste voters. Besides, the non-Scheduled Caste voters in the Jalesar reserved assembly constituency determine the outcome of an election due to their numerical strength. In Jalesar constituency, compared to the Scheduled Castes, non-Scheduled Castes are numerically large in number. Thus, no Scheduled Caste candidate can afford to neglect the non-Scheduled Caste voters in order to win the election. Our survey found this factor of support from the non-Scheduled Caste support as the most important one. Non-Scheduled Caste support, party backing and resourcefulness together making the ideal combination of the success formula for a candidate in the reserved constituency.

Selection of the Scheduled Caste Candidates:

In Uttar Pradesh, "sponsored mobility operates among the Scheduled Caste candidates", notes Paul Brass who observed that the Scheduled Caste votes have been a mainstay for of the Congress in U.P. since independence. Until the 1962 election, the Republican Party and its predecessor, the Scheduled Caste Federation were not successful in U.P. politics. The Scheduled Castes in U.P. have generally accepted the patronage of the Congress government. The Scheduled Caste leaders who were given Congress tickets in the reserved constituencies were moderate and had no base of their own in the local politics or the Congress party

organizations.¹⁰ This is a clear case of 'sponsored mobility' as this phenomenon means the "co-option of minority individuals by a political party for instrumental purposes". The candidate is likely to be called the leader from the periphery. Such a leader would not be likely to be chosen by members of his own group, because he shows uncertain loyalty to their collective interests.¹¹

In Jalesar reserved assembly constituency Congress party nominated only Jatavs as candidates from 1952 to 1977 assembly elections. But, in the 1980 assembly election Congress nominee belonged to the Agaria community. And in 1985, 1989 and 1991 party selected Dhobi candidates. To understand the prevalence of sponsored mobility we have to know the socio-economic and political background of these Scheduled Caste leaders sponsored by the Congress party.

Chiranjilal, a Jatav by caste, was born in Etah city and started his political career by contesting the first two general elections for the U.P. Assembly on Congress ticket. In 1962 general election, Chiranjilal tried to secure the Congress ticket for Jalesar reserved constituency in the assembly election. T.P. Singh stated that the Congress party decided to field Khajanchilal, a local Jatav leader.

10. Paul R. Brass, Factional Politics in an Indian State, The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.105.

11. R.A. Schermerham, Ethnic Plurality in India, (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1968), pp.48-49.

Subsequently Chiranjilal approached U.P.C.C. for the ticket. But the party was firm on its decision to nominate Khajanchilal from Jalesar reserved assembly seat. Chiranjilal was disgusted with party and resigned from the Congress, and joined Swatantra Party. He secured the ticket of the Swatantra Party for assembly election.¹² In this election Rao K.P. Singh contested election from Swatantra Party in Jalesar general Lok Sabha constituency. Rao K.P. Singh was the younger brother of Raja of Awagarh, who was an influential personality of the region. He also supported Chiranjilal which helped him to get elected from the Jalesar constituency.

T.P. Singh, who contested the first two general elections as the Jan Sangh party candidate in Jalesar double member constituency, says that neither the Congress nor Chiranjilal had to bear the election expenses. He further says that there was tough competition to procure the ticket for the general assembly seat. The Congress had a policy of nominating for the general assembly seat only to those aspirants who could bear the expenses of entire election campaign for the reserved seat also. To substantiate his point T.P.Singh says that, Fateh Singh was given the Congress ticket for the general assembly seat of Jalesar in the 1952 election on the

12. Interview with T.P. Singh, September 4, 1991.

condition that he would bear all the election expenses of Chiranjilal contesting from the reserved seat.¹³

Chiranjilal was elected from Jalesar reserved constituency four times. He represented the people of this constituency for twenty years in the assembly. Thus we see that it was the sponsoring by the Congress and the Swatantra Party, that saw Chiranjilal through many elections. Chiranjilal was not necessarily the genuine representative of the Scheduled Castes of the Jalesar Constituency.

In the case of Chiranjilal's nomination the Congress did not have to face any pressure either from Scheduled Caste community or any other organised group within the party in the beginning. Hence there was no competition for the nomination to Jalesar assembly reserved seat. And Chiranjilal, in return, demonstrated perfect loyalty to the Congress in the first two assembly elections and his case was considered by the party sympathetically.¹⁴

T.P. Singh claims that Chiranjilal always was elected through the support of the Thakur community. He says that Chiranjilal used to touch the feet of higher caste people during the election campaign. Because of this reason Thakurs

13. Ibid.

14. Interview with Sevatilal on September 13, 1991 who has contested Assembly election from Jalesar constituency in 1967 on Jan Sangh ticket.

supported him in the elections. The same argument is given by Sevatilal. He says that Chiranjilal was a puppet in the hands of the thakurs. He never sat down on a cot in front of Rajputs. Thus, Chiranjilal seems to be more Thakur-sponsored than party-sponsored.

The Congress (I) did not face any problem to finalise the candidature of Prem Pal Singh. Ram Singh, also a sponsored candidate of Congress (I) was elected to the U.P. Assembly. In the 1980 election, he neither had a base in the party nor in the constituency. Ram Singh came from the Agaria caste. Actually, he was sponsored as an anti-Jatav candidate by the Thakurs. As Khajanchilal, a prominent Congress leader and ex-chairman of Jalesar Municipal Town Area, pointed out since 1978 there was an increasing anti Jatav feelings among the Thakurs, and the Thakurs did not allow the procession on the occasion of the birthday of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Norhori village near Jalesar.¹⁵ T.P. Singh also said that Jatavs of this area wanted to maintain higher status at par with the higher caste. So the Thakurs of the constituency did not like to encourage Jatav representative".¹⁶ Because of this reason Congress (I) nominated Ram Singh for 1980 assembly election as Congress (I) could not find any other suitable non-Jatav candidate in the constituency.

15. Interview with Khanjanchilal on September 25, 1991.

16. Interview with T.P. Singh on September 4, 1991.

Prem Pal Singh is another candidate sponsored by the Congress (I) He belongs to the Dhobi community. Being a post-graduate Prem Singh could work with Madhav Rao Scindhia in Guna (M.P.). He became the Congress-I nominee for 1985, 1989 and 1991 assembly elections from Jalesar reserved constituency. Prem Pal Singh was unknown to the whole constituency because he spent most of the time outside the constituency. Even Jalesar Congress (I) circles came to know of him for the first time when he was given the party ticket for the assembly election in 1985. In this connection Dhanay Kumar Jain, a local Congress (I) leader and Chairman of Awagarh Municipal Town Area, said that generally there is no competition in the Congress party to get the Party ticket for the Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. He also says that U.P.C.C. did not object to the candidature of Ram Singh or Prem Singh because the party aimed at striking a balance in the distribution of political patronage between the Jatavs and other sub-castes of the Scheduled Castes.¹⁷

As regards expenses incurred for election campaign of Prem Pal Singh for the assembly elections, D.C. Jain, a prominent local leader of B.J.P., pointed out that the Congress always took the advantage of the differences and mutual rivalry among the various groups within the Congress

17. Interview with Dhanay Kumar Jain on October 1, 1991.

while choosing their own nominee.¹⁸ Compared to Jalesar reserved assembly constituency, the Jalesar general Lok Sabha seat was much more competitive.

Owing to the stiff competition, as D.C. Jain says Congress (I) made it a condition that whosoever was interested in getting the ticket for the Jalesar general Lok Sabha seat, should bear the electoral expenses of the candidate contesting from Jalesar assembly constituency. In this way, in 1985 to 1991 assembly elections, the expenditure on Prem Pal Singh's elections was shared by the Congress candidates who contested election from Jalesar general Lok Sabha constituency.¹⁹

During the 1989 assembly election, there was an undercurrent of resentment in Jalesar constituency over Prem Pal Singh's performance as an M.L.A. People were complaining about his arrogance and lack of interest in the development of the constituency. It is alleged that he ignored people by not visiting them after winning the election. People belonging to weaker sections felt alienated. When Prem Pal Singh was addressing an election meeting at Jalesar, people gheroad him protesting against his failure to maintain contact with his electorate.

18. Interview with D.C. Jain, September 29, 1991.

19. Ibid.

During the field studies it has been observed that Prem Pal Singh maintained contact with Congress (I) leaders and higher caste people and not with the general electorate. People say that whenever he visits the constituency he stays with Congress- I leader or with the higher caste people. He consults only the higher caste people on the various problems. Thus, it is seen that whether it is Ram Singh or Prem Pal Singh, they are all sponsored by political parties and non-Scheduled Caste leaders. Opposition parties too indulge in this kind of sponsorship.

The Scheduled Caste candidates were benefited from the sponsored mobility initiated by the opposition parties. For example, Madhaw was sponsored by the B.J.P. for 1985, 1989 and 1991 assembly elections. Madhaw is a Nut by caste which is numerically insignificant in the Jalesar reserved constituency. Madhaw is educated up to high school. He was elected for the first time to the U.P. legislative assembly in 1977 on the Janata Party ticket. On the eve of Lok Sabha election in 1980, where the Janata Party was to split up into different political parties, Madhaw joined hands with B.J.P. in the U.P. legislative assembly. Yet in the 1980 assembly election, Madhaw could not get the B.J.P. ticket from the Jalesar reserved constituency. The BJP preferred to choose a Jatav candidate, Siya Ram for 1980 assembly, even though he did not belong to Jalesar constituency. However, Madhaw remained loyal to the party and identified himself as a BJP

worker. His loyalty and commitment to the party paid him dividends as he was given the ticket in 1985 assembly elections from Jalesar reserved constituency. Unfortunately he was defeated by the Congress candidate, Prem Pal Singh. But, in 1989 and 1991, Madhaw elected to the U.P. legislative assembly. That how Prem Pal Singh was defeated is another story of sponsorship. Bakherilal was a close associate of Prem Pal Singh. He campaigned for Prem Pal Singh in the 1985 assembly election from Jalesar constituency. But in 1989, he contested election against Prem Pal Singh as an independent candidate. Later it became clear that Bakherilal was put up as an independent candidate by the pro-BJP faction of higher castes to create a division among the ranks of Scheduled Castes so that the victory of the B.J.P. candidate could be ensured.

It is evident from the above discussion that the Scheduled Caste candidates, whether from the ruling party or the opposition parties, have gained from the sponsored mobility initiated by their respective parties. But the sponsored mobility has adversely affected the political efficacy of the Scheduled Caste leaders. It has helped the political parties in achieving their aims. It is also evident from our study that the nomination process in reserved constituency is for less competitive compared to the general constituencies. In the general constituency forces from within the party participate more actively in the

election process which makes it more competitive, a case of 'contest mobility'. In the reserved constituency various political groups remain inactive and do not participate in the electoral process wholeheartedly. Thus the election in reserved constituency becomes less competitive than the general constituency.

Another point to note is that, comparatively, the elections in Agra West are more competitive than in Jalesar. On the issue of anti-Jatav feelings, both the constituencies share a common note. In Jalesar, the Thakurs support non-Jatav candidates in the assembly elections. T.P. Singh underlined the point that these days the Thakurs and the Jatavs are political rivals. So, the Thakurs of this area do not like to support Jatav candidate. And the higher caste people exerted influence on the decision of political parties to deny ticket, or support the Jatav candidates.²⁰

Political Participation of the Scheduled Castes:

The Scheduled Castes started participating in the politics of Jalesar reserved constituency since 1952. The various dimensions of electoral politics and the respective role of Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes in this constituency are worth-seeing. Table 6.2 shows the details of the caste-wise and party affiliations of the elected leaders covering a period of four decades (1952-1991).

20. Interview with t.P. Singh, September 4, 1991.

Table 6.2

Party Position of MLAS from Jalesar in the State Assembly

Years	Elections (1952-1991)		
	Elected Candidate	Caste	Party
1952*	Chiranjilal	Jatav	INC
"	Fateh Singh	Thakur	INC
1957*	Chiranjilal	Jatav	INC
"	Raghubir Singh	Yadav	PSP
1962	Chiranjilal	Jatav	SWT
1967	Udaybir Singh	Jatav	INC
1969	Chiranjilal	Jatav	BKD
1974	Mathu Ram	Jatav	INC
1977	Madhaw	Nut	JNP
1980	Ram Singh	Agaria	INC
1985	Prem Pal Singh	Dhobi	INC
1989	Madhaw	Nut	BJP
1991	Madhaw	Nut	BJP

* In 1952 and 1957, there was provision of double member seat, one seat was for SC and other for general category.

Source: Report on the legislative assembly elections to the Uttar Pradesh (New Delhi - Election Commission of India).

The Congress Party has been a strong political force in the Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. In 1952 and 1957, under the double member seat system, two legislators were elected, one from the Scheduled Castes and another from the non-Scheduled Castes. In these two elections congress party had won both the general and reserved seats. But Raghubir Singh was elected with the help of Praja Socialist Party in 1957 from the general seat. As he belonged to the Yadav caste, he received support from the Yadav community, which is dominant in Nidhouli Kalan Block which was then part

of the Jalesar constituency in 1957, contributing to his success.

In the 1962 general election, Rao Krishan Pal Singh, the younger brother of Raja of Awagarh contested election from Jalesar Lok Sabha seat. The Thakur community wholeheartedly supported the Swatantra Party candidates Rao Krishan Pal Singh and Chiranjilal, besides also mobilising Scheduled Caste voters. In the 1967, Udaybir Singh, the Congress candidate got elected for the U.P. legislative assembly, defeating Chiranjilal of the Swatantra Party. In 1967, the Jatav votes were divided among Congress, BJS, RPI and Swatantra Party candidates as all these candidates were from Jatav community. Udaybir Singh, also a Jatav candidate, who was supported by the upper castes got elected to the assembly.

In the 1969 mid-term poll, Indian National Congress split into two groups, one led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and another by the 'syndicate'. The same year under the leadership of Charan Singh, Bharatiya Kranti Dal was formed which became a major political force in Jalesar as in other parts of Western U.P. The B.K.D. emerged as the second strongest party in the state with massive support in the rural areas. In 1969, Chiranjilal won the election under the banner of B.K.D. He was supported by peasants and Jatav community.

In the 1974 assembly election, Nathu Ram contested election on the Congress ticket. He also belonged to Jatav caste and was a relative of Chiranjilal. In this election Chiranjilal filed his nomination as an independent candidate, but he campaigned for Nathu Ram. Nathu Ram mobilized Brahmins, Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes in his support. The Thakurs supported Bharatiya Jan Sangh candidate Madhaw Nut. Nathu Ram won the election with a thin margin of 0.7 per cent votes. He secured 36.1 per cent of the total votes while Madhaw secured 35.4 per cent ²¹

In the 1977 Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly elections, there was an anti-Congress wave, a fall out of the Emergency rule and state repression of the Congress party. One of the senior most Scheduled Caste leaders, Jagjivan Ram resigned from the Congress (I) and formed a new party called Congress For Democracy (CFD) and entered into an electoral alliance with the Janata Party at both the state and national level. Consequently a majority of the Scheduled Caste leaders landed in the Janata Party camp with the 1977 elections.

Since our case study starts with 1977 let us go into a bit more details. Our Survey (see table 6.3) reveals that.

21. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, State Elections in India Vidhan Sabha Elections 1952-1985: The North Part II Bihar Uttar Pradesh (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1988), p.675.

56.45 per cent of the Scheduled Caste voters surveyed cast their votes in favour of the Janata Party candidate. It shows that, out of 39 Jatav voters surveyed 23 voted in favour of Madhaw, the Janata Party candidate, and 8 Nut voters voted for him because he belonged to the same caste. The table also indicates that a majority of the Dhobi and the Balmiki voters, on the contrary voted for Congress candidate Het Ram Singh. The Congress (I) candidate lost the election essentially due to the unpopularity of the Congress on account of the emergency of 1975-77. During the emergency people had to suffer police atrocities, the arbitrary use of Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) as a convenient political weapon, and arbitrary implementation of family planning programmes. Political activists and the leaders belonging to the opposition parties, were arrested. People were increasingly deprived of their fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution.

The political rivalry between the Thakurs and the Jatavs made a considerable impact after the 1980 assembly election. In the 1980 elections, the upper caste Congress (I) leaders fielded Ram Singh who belonged to the Agaria caste for Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. Siya Ram was a B.J.P. nominee and Makundilal was the Janata Party candidate for the same constituency.

Table 6-3

Voters' Caste and their Electoral behaviour in Jalesar reserved
Assembly Constituency (1977-1991)

Party	Jatav	Dhobi	Nut	Agaria	Balmiki	Total

1977						
Congress	16(25.81)	6(9.68)	-	2(3.22)	3(4.84)	
JNP	23(37.10)	3(4.84)	8(12.90)	1(1.61)	-	62
IND	-	-	-	-	-	

1980						
Congress	8(10.96)	13(17.81)	2(2.74)	11(15.07)	7(9.59)	
JNP	22(30.14)	-	4(5.48)	-	-	73
BJP	5(6.85)	-	1(1.37)	-	-	
IND	-	-	-	-	-	

1985						
Congress	13(16.45)	19(24.05)	-	-	6(7.59)	
BJP	-	-	11(13.92)	5(6.33)	-	79
BSP	25(31.64)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	-	-	-	-	

1989						
				6(7.23)		
Congress	11(13.25)	16(19.28)	-	-	-	83
BJP	-	-	15(18.07)	-	-	
BSP	29(34.94)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	1(1.20)	-	5(6.02)	-	

1991						
Congress	8(7.41)	18(16.67)	-	5(4.63)	4(3.70)	
BJP	-	-	17(15.74)	-	1(0.92)	108
Janata Dal	20(18.52)	-	-	-	2(1.85)	
SJP	19(17.59)	-	-	-	-	
BSP	14(12.96)	-	-	-	-	
IND	-	-	-	-	-	

Siya Ram did not hail from Jalesar. Besides, he failed to muster enough support from the Thakurs and the Jatavs, which led to his defeat. T.P. Singh, a prominent, local B.J.P. leader says that eventhough Siya Ram was a official B.J.P. nominee for the Jalesar Constituency, he himself opposed Siya Ram because he was a Jatav by caste and outsider by birth. The same reasons made the Thakurs to oppose Siya Ram and vote for Ram Singh, the Congress-I candidate who belonged to Agaria caste.²² Interestingly, 38.36 per cent of the Scheduled Castes voted for the Congress-I candidate. According to our Survey, 22 (30.14 per cent) out of a total of 35 Jatavs voted in favour of the Janata Party candidate. While only 10.96 per cent of the Scheduled Caste voters voted for Congress 6.35 per cent voted in favour of B.J.P. candidate. Thus, it can be concluded that the Jatavs of Jalesar assembly constituency were not in favour of the B.J.P. Further the table also indicates that voters belonging to the Dhobi and the Agaria Communities voted in favour of the Congress candidate who belong to the Agaria community. The Table also shows that the Dhobi Community of Jalesar have been the traditional supporters of the Congress Party. An analysis of the voting pattern would reveal that in the 1985 election, the Scheduled Castes voted for the candidate belonging to their respective sub-castes.

22. Interview with T.P. Singh, September 4, 1991.

In the 1989 election, there was an electoral alliance between the Janata Dal and B.J.P. and in the seat adjustment the Jalesar Constituency was given to B.J.P. which fielded Madhaw as its candidate. Prem Pal Singh was given the Congress ticket again. Madhaw emerged victorious in the election and was fully supported by the upper castes and the Janata Dal. The B.S.P. candidate Mahendra Pal Singh stood third. As the table explains, in the 1989 election also the Scheduled Castes voting pattern was divided on the basis of their caste affinity rather than party obligations.

In 1991 elections there was a strong wave in favour of the B.J.P., which mobilised masses on the issues of alleged atrocities on Hindus by Mulayam Singh Yadav government and on the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya at the disputed site. This time the B.J.P., which had a strong political base among the upper castes, also received the support of the Brahmins who were traditionally congress supporters. Apart from the Hindu religious fervour unleashed by the BJP, the success of B.J.P. candidate was also attributed to the lack of understanding among the Backward Classes on the Mandal issue and the division of Janata Dal into two factions. The split in anti-B.J.P. votes of the opposition parties was also

one of the important causes for the success of B.J.P. candidate.

The most stunning feature of the 1991 election was that the Congress candidate P.P. Singh lost his deposit. Table 6.3 shows that out of the 108 Scheduled Caste voters, 35 voted for Congress, which comprised of 8 Jatavs, 18 Dhobis, 5 Agarias and 4 Balmikis. The Jatav vote was split among the Janata Dal, S.J.P. and the B.S.P. as all these three parties had nominated candidates from the Jatav community.

The level of participation of the Scheduled Castes in the political activities are lower in Jalesar constituency than in Agra West constituency. As table 6.4 shows, out of 160 respondents, 21 (13.12 per cent) participated in the election campaign, only 11 (6.88 per cent) participated in the political discussions.

The table also indicates that Scheduled Castes rarely attend the election meetings. Out of 160 respondents only 14 (8.75 per cent) said that they attended meetings in various elections. They also do not participate frequently in the rallies or demonstration; only 9.37 per cent respondents participated in the election rallies. The Scheduled Castes do not participate actively in the electoral politics like the upper castes; they only cast their votes.

Table 6.4

Participation of the Respondents in the Political
Activities in Jalesar

Activity	Respondents	Percentage
Campaign	21	13.12
Discussion	11	6.88
Demonstration	15	9.37
Attending meeting	14	8.75
Do not know	99	61.88
Total	160	100.00

Our discussion so far suggests that the Scheduled Castes were disunited in their political support and their preference was based on their sub-castes and not the party. This cleavage gave the upper castes a strong handle for playing their manipulative role with regard to the electoral success of the B.J.P. candidates they preferred. The factionalism among the Scheduled Castes always acted as a major impediment, for their genuine mobility in the political field. Scores of castes and sub-castes within the Scheduled Castes have robbed them of any semblance of homogeneity. On the contrary, the Upper Castes always remained a homogenous entity, at least as far as their need for domination over Scheduled Castes were concerned thus facilitating them to wield tremendous political power and

influence, thereby dictating terms in the politics of Jalesar constituency. A significant fallout of the growth of the political power of the upper castes was that a united Scheduled Caste leadership could never emerge and entire community continued to be plagued by the caste and inter-sub-caste feuds and factionalism. As we have seen in our discussion, during elections the Scheduled Caste voters always preferred their own sub-caste candidates. The slogans like, "Jatav vote for Jatav candidate", "Dhobis vote for Dhobi candidate", and "Nuts for Nut candidate" were invariably raised. To add to the prevailing caste games the upper castes always tried to put their own Scheduled Caste puppet candidates purely with the intention of splitting the Scheduled Caste votes, to ensure the victory of the candidates of their choice.

To sum up, the political mobility of a Scheduled Caste candidate in the Jalesar Constituency, like in any other Constituency was always determined by one or the other political party the interests of the Upper Castes. Due to a number of socio-economic factors Scheduled Castes' political consciousness and their participation in the political processes always remained very low. This along with the inter-caste and sub-caste conflict among them made the Upper Castes' dominance in the electoral politics of the constituency an easy task.

CHAPTER VII

**AN OVERVIEW AND THE EMERGING
TRENDS OF THE POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES**

Having seen the dynamics of the political processes in the reserved constituencies in general and in Agra west and Jalesar in particular, it is time to do an assessment and summing up of the political development the Scheduled Castes have made by making use of the weapon of political reservation. It would not be unfair to say that the Scheduled Caste political representation has not substantially improved the political capacity of the Scheduled Castes. An attempt is made here to unveil the impact of political reservation on Scheduled Castes, especially to find whether they, after four decades of political reservation have been able to come nearer to participatory politics. The emergence and role of BSP in Jalesar and Agra west in particular and U.P. in general are also specifically analysed, in this chapter.

Impact of Political Reservation

Initially the provision of reserved constituency was a temporary measure for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Article 334 of the Constitution provided for the reservations of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha for a period of ten years. Subsequently, through several constitutional amendments the provision regarding the reservation of seats has been continuously extended by every ten years. It will again be reviewed in 2000 A.D.

Political reservation gives an opportunity to Scheduled Castes to use representative bodies for their own interests and to liberate themselves from the age old clutches of the socio-economic and political subjugation by the upper castes. This argument may be viewed in a historical context, especially of the background of severe deprivation, social segregation and economic exploitation of the Scheduled Castes which provide the little access to political resources. The provision of reserved constituencies therefore, enabled them to make their presence felt in the legislative bodies.

The provision of reserved constituency has not so far contributed much to impart political training to Scheduled Castes and develop their political skill so that persons with adequate leadership qualities could emerge from among them. The Scheduled Caste politicians who have reached the top positions through reservations have acquired some mobilization power even outside the reserved constituencies.

It is observed that the presence of the Scheduled Castes in the legislative bodies is largely due to the provision of reserved constituencies. Most of the dalits have had to face stiff competition and they can never dream of contesting elections on their own owing to the lack of professional skill and leadership qualities. The provision of reserved constituencies helps the Scheduled Caste politician to get into the legislative bodies where there is

no reservation. Thus, the reserved constituencies come handy in providing a substantial Scheduled Caste political representation in legislative bodies that would otherwise be lacking.

Despite the obvious merit of reservations, the Scheduled Caste political leadership which have come up through political reservation have generally served the interests of political parties and non-Scheduled Caste voters and not its Scheduled Caste brethren. It is true to a great extent that the legislators coming from the reserved constituencies are less articulate, less assertive and less independent than the upper caste legislators. For example, Madhav Nut from Jalesar and Krishan Gopal from Agra west reserved constituencies are MLAs with neither political skill nor with any base in the party or the constituency. The MLAs and MPs elected from the reserved constituency are usually sponsored by the ruling upper caste elite. This is because candidates contesting election from the reserved constituency are dependent on the party support, and on the upper caste backing of money and muscle, and campaign management, the process of the development of independent political leadership among the Scheduled Castes has got blocked.

Contrary to expectations of the framers of the constitution, the reservation policy has proved to be far less a success formula in ameliorating the socio-economic and

political conditions of the Scheduled Caste masses. The Scheduled Caste representatives and MPs are more concerned about their political position rather than fighting for the betterment of the condition of Scheduled Castes. Their political survival does not allow them from escaping the structure and logic of depending on the Non-Scheduled Castes who outnumber the Scheduled Caste population in the reserved constituencies.

Selective Upward Mobility Among the Scheduled Castes

Political reservation has helped as a weapon for a section of the Scheduled Castes to come further up in the social and political ladder of the existing social system. For instance, the Jatavs of Agra. It is true that the Jatavs were better off compared to the rest of the erstwhile untouchables, even before the enactment of the constitutional provisions of political reservation. The Jatavs of Agra organised themselves under the banner of the Jatav Mahasabha in 1917. It was a leading socio-political movement since 1920 acting as a major pressure group in Agra. The Jatav Mahasabha succeeded in pressurising the then U.P. Government to appoint Bohre Khem Chand as a member of the U.P. Legislative Council in 1920. In 1930, it also demanded abolition of the word 'Chamar' from the Government list. The Jatavs managed to get the U.P. Government to remove the term "Chamar" from all government records and the term Jatav was

used instead. The Jatavs again did not want to be identified as Chamars and demanded that they should not be included under such a status group.¹ In a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for India in London, they stated that "we desire to make it plain that we, as Jatavs, claim to be recognised as a separate caste amongst the Scheduled Castes without being amalgamated with any other caste under the list of the Scheduled Castes with which we have no endogamous connection".² The British government accepted the demands of Jatavs in 1939 after a prolonged struggle of Jatavs of Agra under the leaders of All India Jatav Youth League.

Thus, the process of upward political mobility among Jatavs started even before independence. Most of the Jatavs of Agra are economically well off. They have adequate economic resources to contest in elections at their own cost and do not have to depend on either political parties or on upper castes. But, this is not so in Jalesar. In Jalesar reserved constituency, the Scheduled Castes are economically very poor so they cannot engage in political activities on their own.

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1. Owen Lynch, "The Politics of Untouchability: A Case from Agra India" in Melton Singer and Bernard S. Cohan (ed.), Structure and Change in Indian Society (Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), p.221.
 2. Memorandum submitted to the Secretary of state for India by All India Jatav Youth League, Agra, December 1938:

The case of Jalesar itself shows that Scheduled Castes would not have got even any nominal representation if there is no reservation policy. In fact, the present dependence of Scheduled Caste politicians on the upper castes speaks of the other side of the story that only the post-independent policy of reservation helped the economically poor Scheduled Castes to send their political representatives to the decision making bodies.

If we compare the political process of Jalesar reserved assembly constituency with that of Agra West we find that the political process is less participatory in Jalesar reserved assembly constituency than in Agra West. The candidates are sponsored by political parties in both constituencies, but the competition in getting the tickets from political parties for Agra west constituency is higher compared to Jalesar. The political activities in Agra West constituency are dominated by the Scheduled Castes. In Jalesar constituency, the Scheduled Caste candidates depend on the upper castes for these.

Among the Scheduled Castes, the Jatavs are dominating the politics of Agra and Jalesar reserved assembly constituency since 1952. But after 1974, the other sub castes of the Scheduled Castes have also started to play an active role in Jalesar. Madhav (Nut), Ram Singh (Agaria), Prem Pal Singh (Dhobi) were elected from Jalesar reserved

assembly constituencies. In Agra west, however, the hegemony of Jatavs continues. They are in a strong position in the Congress (I). Gulab Sehra is vice-president of Uttar Pradesh Congress (I) Committee and Azad Kumar Kardam is District Congress (I) Committee president. The Jatavs in Agra are highly educated compared to the Jatavs of Jalesar constituency who are predominantly agricultural labourers working in the farms of upper caste landlords. In the Jalesar reserved assembly constituency, as the level of political consciousness is at level, there are no powerful factions among the Scheduled Caste people who can compete to secure ticket or other benefits.

In Agra, there exist a political rivalry between the Balmikis and the Jatavs. It was observed that the Balmikis have developed a feeling that they are not properly represented by the Jatavs. Indrajit argues that the Balmikis are neglected in the local politics because of their numerical inferiority, and they are not in a position to influence electoral politics by electing the candidate of their own caste in the U.P. Legislative Assembly.³

The intra-caste factionalism is also widely prevalent here. There are several factions, each headed by a different Jatav leader. For instance, Gulab Sehra and Azad Kumar

3. Interview with Indrajit on 28 June, 1991.

Kardam are leading separate groups within the local Congress (I). In the election time, both factions compete covertly or overtly to secure the Assembly or Lok Sabha tickets. In a way, the inter caste and intra caste contest for superiority is to be seen in the context of political development and urge for upward mobility than on moralistic lines. The recent Jat-Jatav or Thakur-Jatav conflicts in the Hindi belt point at the urge of the affordable dalits to assert and the upper caste resistance to this. The emergence of strong political formation like BSP led by the dalits is not but the result of the added upward mobility achieved by the Scheduled Castes through the political weapon of reservation.

Emergence of Bahujan Samaj Party

During the pre-independence period, the movement for socio-economic and political upliftment of the Scheduled Castes gained momentum under the leadership of Babasaheb Ambedkar. This awakening continued even after independence. The Scheduled Caste Federation was formed and later on it was transformed into the Republican Party of India (RPI). In the 1962 and 1967 elections, the RPI was an alternative to Congress in Agra region. But after 1967, the RPI lost much of its strength in Uttar Pradesh. Now, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) consisting predominantly of Scheduled Castes, backward classes and Muslims has emerged as an important dalit-led political party, especially in U.P. The Backwards and

Minority Community Employees Federation the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti were organised first in 1978 and 1981 respectively and were headed by Kanshi Ram who is a chamar Sikh from Ropar. The BSP drew its strength from these frontal organisations. Formally the BSP was declared a political party on 14 April 1984.

The BSP envisages political unity among the Scheduled Castes, backward classes and minorities which is directed against the interests of upper caste Hindus. The BSP raised the slogan: "Brahmin Thakur, Bania Chor, Baki Sab DS-4". This idea of BSP is not exactly new, the RPI has been trying for four decades to unite these communities, but with no success. However, Kanshi Ram has advanced further than what the RPI could do for the Scheduled Castes.

The BSP contested the 1984 Lok Sabha and 1985 assembly elections, but its performance was very poor. The Bijnore bye-election in 1985 demonstrated the growing strength of BSP. In this election, the Congress won with a narrow margin. The emergence of BSP in the 1987 bye-election played a significant role in U.P. While in the March 1985 assembly election, the BSP polled only 4 per cent valid votes in U.P. after two years in 1987 bye-election the percentage went up by 26.31 per cent. This was a significant achievement for the BSP, when the other parties like the

BJP, Janata Party, Lok Dal and the CPI together had secured less than two percent of the valid votes.⁴

In the bye-election of Hardwar reserved Lok Sabha constituency in 1987, the BSP candidate Ms. Mayawati polled 1,35,390 votes, and the Congress (I) candidate Ram Singh secured 1,49,135 votes. Ms. Mayawati lost the election to the Congress (I) candidate Ram Singh by a margin of 13,745 votes.⁵ The Lok Dal which claimed U.P as its stronghold had to be content with third position. The Lok Dal candidate Mrs. Vimala Rakesh polled 39,780 votes and the Janata party candidate, Ram Vilas Paswan who won then with the record of largest margin in Lok Sabha elections in 1977 and 1989, could muster only a little over 34,000 votes and lost his deposit.⁶ In the bye-elections of assembly constituencies, Rath and Pathi in U.P, the BSP candidates secured second position. In the past also the BSP did not win a single seat in U.P and Punjab assembly elections. But the presence of BSP in the contest helped the opposition parties. Eighty opposition candidates could win the election only because of the presence of BSP. Although, it lost all the 207 seats it contested, it secured 10 lakh votes.⁷

4. Indian Express, (New Delhi), March 30, 1987.

5. The Times of India, (New Delhi), March 26, 1989.

6. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), March 31, 1987.

7. Ibid.

By 1989 and 1991, the political picture has substantially changed. The Scheduled Castes and Muslims who were traditionally supporters of the Congress (I) shifted towards the BSP in the 1989 and 1991 elections. The BSP has championed the cause of dalits, poor and the downtrodden. The BSP not only mobilised Scheduled Castes but also established its base among Muslims. After the 'Shilanyas' held at Ayodhya, Muslims by and large, decided to vote against the Congress. Their votes went either to the BSP or to the Muslim candidates of the Janata Dal and, in some cases, to the CPI and CPM candidates. The election results show that BSP won, in the 1989 elections, in constituencies like Nagina, Nazibabad, Afzalgarh, Jalalpur, Nawabganj which are Muslim dominated areas. Mitra Sen Yadav, the CPI nominee, won the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat because of the en bloc voting in his favour by the Muslims.⁸

In the 1989 elections, the BSP, for the first time won 13 assembly seats in U.P and three Lok Sabha seats, two from U.P and one from Punjab. Again in the 1991 elections the party won 12 assembly seats in U.P and one Lok Sabha seat from Madhya Pradesh. More than the number of seats won, it is significant to note that BSP could secure second largest votes in about hundred assembly seats and a considerable percentage of votes in the Lok Sabha constituencies. The BSP

8. Shivlal, Non-Congressism in Reborn 1989-90 Polls, (New Delhi: Election Archives, 1990), p.337.

victories came mainly from the rural areas. In the urban areas the BSP is yet to establish itself as a force to be reckoned with. The BSP's success in U.P owes mainly to the support it could get from the lower castes and the Muslims. The political rivalry within sections of the ruling elite, belonging to higher and middle castes also contributed to a certain extent to the rise of BSP. The alliance between the Scheduled Caste and the backward classes was another factor.⁹

The Bahujan Samaj Party strongly opposed upper caste chauvinism and at the same time linked up the demands for reservation in government jobs for both the backward classes and the Muslims. The Muslims and Chamars in U.P unitedly opposed growing Hindu communalism. They saw in communalism a direct threat to the lower castes.¹⁰ The BSP's slogans against Brahmanism and domination of the upper castes, could unite at a single stretch with both the Muslims and lower castes. It also raised the demand for reservations to enlist the support of backward classes.¹¹

The BSP in U.P. follows a policy of anti-Congressism and anti-Bhramanism in order to divert the attention of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes etc.

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9. E.S Yurlova, Scheduled Castes in India, (New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1990), p.203.
10. Link, (New Delhi), April 4, 1987, p.11.
11. E.S. Yurlova, Op. Cit., p.204.

the BSP also tries its best to implement Mandal Commission's Report into an enforceable law. This approach has helped the BSP to secure more votes in U.P., that it could even uproot the Congress-I from the state by its political superiority.

Thus, it is the new caste equations that helped the BSP in its electoral fight. The factor of upward mobility that we noted earlier also played its part. A section of Scheduled Castes, better placed in respect of socio-economic educational status, constituted the growing elite who began to struggle for share of power. The BSP could take root because of all these favourable factors.

The BSP had its sway in the Jalesar constituency also. In the 1985 assembly election, Mahendra Pal Singh, a BSP candidate for the Jalesar reserved assembly seat, polled 15.8 per cent of the votes and came to third position.¹² Mahendra Pal Singh improved his position in the 1989 assembly elections from the same constituency. He secured 17.77 per cent of the total polled votes, though he was left at the third position.¹³ In 1991 elections, he polled only 5.76 per cent of the total votes,¹⁴ owing to the division of the Jatav votes between BSP, Janata Dal and Samajvadi Janata Party.

12. V.B. Singh, Sankar Bose, Op. Cit., p.675.

13. Amar Ujala (Agra), November 29, 1989.

14. Donik Jagaran (Agra), June 26, 1991.

In the last three elections, BSP's performances were very poor in Agra West. In the 1985 assembly election, its candidate Radhey Shyam Bharat secured only 0.76 per cent of the total polled votes. And in 1989 and 1991 assembly elections, the party candidates received only 3.14 per cent and 2.90 per cent of total polled votes respectively.¹⁵ Factional feuds and the general weak urban base of BSP are the two reasons behind the BSP debacle in Agra West. During the field work it is observed that most of the Jatavs of Jalesar supported BSP. In both Jalesar and Agra West, BSP is considered to be a Scheduled Caste party. The upper castes of these areas do not support the BSP. Thus, based more in rural areas, BSP is getting identified fully with the details. Overall, one should say that the very rise of BSP is catalysed, if not caused, by the policy of political reservation.

Merits and Demerits of Political Reservation

Political reservation gave Scheduled Castes a chance to show their political presence felt in all the representative legislature bodies without facing an unequal freight with the upper caste elites. At the same time, as our study of Jalesar and Agra West has shown, the political practice in the reserved constituencies have led to results that are not in the interest of the masses of Scheduled Castes.

15. Amar Ujala, November 28, 1989 and Dainik Jagaran, (Agra), June 19, 1991.

Practically, a wrong leadership is reared from the Scheduled Castes in the reserved constituencies. But, gains for atleast a section of Scheduled Castes should be acknowledged as well. Structurally, the reserved constituencies give less scope for the acting political participation of Scheduled Castes before an overwhelming majority of non-Scheduled Caste electorate. Let us examine all these aspects one by one.

I. Demographic Constraint in the Political Participation of Scheduled Castes

In a reserved constituency, the demographic profile of the voters is not particularly advantageous to Scheduled Caste candidates. Normally, Scheduled Castes do not exceed 15 to 30 per cent of the total population. Majority of the votes obviously come from different segments, mainly belonging to upper and middle castes. If we take into account the percentage of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes votes, we note that the Scheduled Castes are not in a position to elect candidates of their own. Successive elections in reserved constituencies have provided some interesting results. In these constituencies the polling of non-Scheduled Caste votes has always been low. There is no keen interest among the candidates owing to the lack of political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes, to their low political participation.

It is assumed that through political reservations Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have started sharing

power with higher castes. The fact is that the token participation in the political process does not indicate any power sharing by Scheduled Castes. This type of token participation existed in the pre-independence period too.

II A Dependent Political Leadership of Scheduled Castes

Ghanshyam Shah¹⁶ says that the purpose of political reservations is to enable the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes representatives to voice the grievances of the oppressed section in general and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in particular. They are also expected to bring pressure on the government to rectify the injustices done to their communities. However, they face a dilemma; if they ventilate the grievances of their communities, they are branded as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe leaders; and if they do not do so they are alleged to be adopting an elitist attitude and ignoring their brethren.

The socio-economic background of Scheduled Caste politicians is different from those who are coming from other higher and middle caste backgrounds, who are highly educated and trained in the art of politics and supported by man power and money. Despite being elite among their Scheduled Caste brethren, these Scheduled Caste legislators, who lack the

16. Ghanshyam Shah, "Protective discrimination, equality and political will", in V.P. Shah, B.C. Agrawal, ed., Reservation Policy, Programmes and Issues (Jaipur: Rawat Publication, 1986), pp.3-4.

above mentioned qualities of the upper caste politicians feel alienated.¹⁷ This is a major cause for their poor performance within the parliament and outside as well.

Though the Scheduled Caste political leaders have secured legislative positions, they could not secure effective power to express the problems of their communities. They have proved very weak in getting implemented the laws enacted for the benefits of the Scheduled Castes. Narayana's¹⁸ study indicates that the legislators did not actively participate in the debate and discussions held in the state assemblies or the parliament on the issues related to Scheduled Caste community.

The Scheduled Caste legislators do use their numerical strength as a power bloc in faction-ridden party politics and they work as a balancing force between rival factions. In return for their support to one or the other faction, they bargain for political positions in the cabinet or various committees or statutory bodies. But they do nothing concrete against atrocities committed against the Scheduled Castes by the landlords or upper castes nor do they put pressure on the

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17. G. Narayana, "The Political Elite Among Scheduled Castes", Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, vol.VIII, no.2, April-June 1974.
 18. G. Narayana, "Rule Making for Scheduled Castes Analysis of Lok Sabha Debates", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.XV, no.18, February 23, 1980.

administration for the implementation of minimum wages or distribution of land.

The Scheduled Caste representatives owe allegiance to their party. They contest as party nominees and get the benefit of the party machinery both in terms of numerical support and financial power, elements necessary in securing victory. Moreover, the political parties prefer as party candidate a person who is willing to toe the party line, and they ignore those Scheduled Caste leaders who are vocal, and who hold independent opinion on the problems of Scheduled Castes.. The political parties appear to be more interested in capturing power rather than in improving the socio-economic conditions of deprived communities. They select only those persons as party candidates who are relatively better off. Hence, a majority of the Scheduled Caste legislators belong to the upper strata of these communities.

✓ As long as the Scheduled Castes are represented by these urban, educated and relatively well to do politicians the mere electoral participation is not going to transform the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Caste masses in the present political system. These Scheduled Caste politicians have nothing in common with impoverished Scheduled Caste masses whom they claim to represent. Thus, they are less interested in the solution of the multiple problems and evils faced by the poor Scheduled Caste masses.

Instead, they are more interested in trading their political base for personal gain by striking a compromise with the ruling classes to safeguard their own political interest and also the interest of the upper caste dominated political parties to which they belong.

The Scheduled Caste masses complained that the representatives of Jalesar and Agra west constituency are careless regarding the problems of their own caste people. They lack political wisdom and understanding of the local problems. Most of the people in these areas are educationally and socio-economically backward and have low political consciousness. Consequently, they are not capable of representing the legitimate aspirations of the Scheduled Caste masses. Though some of the Scheduled Caste representatives are politically conscious and are capable of proper articulation, they are forced to remain silent owing to their association with political parties and their fear of party discipline.

The Scheduled Caste politicians have been benefited from the constitutional provisions regarding the reservation in the assembly and Lok Sabha. Their status in the society has also improved. But these representatives have failed to achieve any substantial gains for the Scheduled Caste masses. The prime objective of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and those who were engaged in the task of framing constitution was to

build an egalitarian social system by eradicating poverty, untouchability and various other social evils. But even today the millions of dalits are living under miserable conditions of life. The political leaders are utilising the reservation policy as an instrument to promote their self interest. These politicians never tried to organise the Scheduled Caste masses to protest against oppression and various social evils imposed on them by the upper castes. It is quite difficult for a poor Scheduled Caste to meet his own representative. Most of the people are required to meet their leaders only in their office because they are least interested to meet the people by visiting their constituencies.¹⁹

III Limited Gains of Political Reservation

Despite the obvious demerits of the present reservation policy, it is also a fact that the voice of oppressed classes is heard in the parliament and state assemblies precisely because of the existing reservation policy. This is obvious when we see that the Scheduled Caste representatives from unreserved constituencies amount to almost nil.

19. C. Parvathamma, "Ambedkar and After: The Position and Future of India Scheduled Caste Masses and Classes", eastern Anthropologist, vol.26, no.3, July-September 1973, pp.226-27.

Table 7.1

SC/ST Members Elected to the Lok Sabha from Unreserved Constituencies

Years	SC	ST
1952	5	1
1957	6	3
1962	1	2
1967	-	1
1971	1	4
1977	-	4
1980	2	3
1984	2	7

Source: Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Twenty Eighth Report 1986-87 (New Delhi: Government of India, 1988), p.534.

Table 7.2

SC/ST Members Elected to the Vidhan Sabhas from Unreserved Constituencies

General Elections	SC	ST
Ist General Election	7	4
2nd General Election	9	11
3rd General Election	17	31
4th General Election	6	11
5th General Election	4	14
6th General Election	1	2

Source: Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 1978-79, Twenty-sixth Report (New Delhi: Government of India, 1980), p.35.

The tables 7.1 and 7.2 show the number of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates elected from unreserved constituencies. The state of affairs of the Scheduled Caste representation through the general constituencies, whether for the Vidhan Sabha or for Lok Sabha, as the tables speak, shows that it is only because of political reservation Scheduled Castes could get the existing representation in legislative bodies. As the table 7.1 indicates the number of candidates who won from the general constituencies to the Lok Sabha has declined after the 1962 general elections.

In general, we can say that Scheduled Castes cannot get elected to Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas except through the reserved constituency. Owing to their weak social, economic positions, they cannot compete with upper castes in the general constituencies. The political parties also prefer a non Scheduled Caste candidate in the general constituency. In most of the constituencies, the Scheduled Castes are in a minority. Thus, they are not in a position to win elections from the general constituencies. Moreover, the upper castes do not generally support a Scheduled Caste candidates.

During the field study, it was observed that when a Scheduled Caste MLA comes to visit Jalesar constituency, he does not even meet his people. On the contrary, when the representatives visit the constituency they spend most of their time with their local party leaders who generally

belong to upper castes. This is precisely because they are more dependent on the upper caste leaders for stabilising their political position. The situation is different in the Agra west constituency where representatives freely interact with both the Scheduled Castes and the upper castes. But the complaint here is of the sub-caste loyalties.

Despite protective discrimination, the overall condition of the Scheduled Caste community has not improved much. Untouchability is still practised, caste prejudices against the Scheduled Castes continue and the majority of Scheduled Castes are severely exploited and live below the poverty line. The gulf between the Scheduled Castes and the rest of the society is not bridged with any visible impact by the last four decades of welfare and upliftment activities. But one must admit that during the post-independent period a section of the Scheduled Castes have become politically mobilized and conscious owing the reservation policy: This section forms only 0.2 per cent of the Scheduled Castes. At the national and state level also a few dalit leaders are elected from general constituencies.

It is also a fact that the Scheduled Caste representatives from reserved constituencies have helped the Scheduled Castes in many ways. A reserved constituency is a political institution which gives the Scheduled Castes protection against manifold exploitation. The majority of

the Scheduled Caste masses believe that the provision of reserved constituency is a safety-mechanism to their interests. Time and again they emphasise the need for continuing this policy. There is a feeling that if the reserved constituencies are abolished, they will not be in a position to secure any place in the legislatures through the general constituencies. It is true that at this stage the abolition of reservation will deprive the Scheduled Castes of their facility to express their grievances in the legislatures, as they will be left with no representatives in the various institutions. This might result in greater exploitation and discrimination by the ruling classes headed by the upper castes. Thus, reservation is an essential instrument to safeguard the interest of Scheduled Castes.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The provision of reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes was incorporated into the Constitution to give protection to the Scheduled Castes and to enable them to participate in the legislative machinery more freely. It was anticipated that this provision would help the neglected section of Indian society namely the Scheduled Castes, to bring forth and develop an effective and sincere leadership which would further lead to their complete and active participation in the Indian polity. It was envisaged that the integration of these communities into the social fabric of India could be achieved through such measures of 'positive discrimination'.

Though the primary objective of the idea of 'reservation' for the Scheduled Castes was to give adequate representation to these neglected sections and to integrate them into the social mainstream of the Indian society at par with other sections of the society, in substantial terms socio-economic and political development remained more or less an unfinished task. Today, the Scheduled Caste leaders are less articulate and less assertive than the upper caste leaders. The reserved seats have failed to produce the kind of leaderships which could efficiently represent their respective communities. In the present study we analyse various reasons for this failure.

The factors responsible for non-realisation of the objectives of reservation are many. In our case study of two reserved assembly constituencies- Agra West and Jalesar- we have tried to probe into these factors. In the study, we saw that the political disunity of the Scheduled Castes posed numerous problems. And this disunity was mainly fostered by the various political parties they always depended. These political parties controlled by the upper castes used many manipulative tactics to maintain their political supremacy.

In the democratic system, the electorate plays an important role in the pursuit of acquiring political power. The urge for political power often led the political forces, both at individual and institutional level, to practice electoral abuses in order to make sure that a particular electorate is safe for their electoral victory. We have investigated such electoral abuses, their nature and extent in the Indian context with special reference to the two reserved constituencies chosen for our study.

Our study shows that the Congress party, which was the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh, practiced electoral abuses during the changes that were being brought out by the Delimitation Commission in the boundaries of Agra West and Jalesar reserved assembly constituency. The methods of delimitation of the constituencies helped the Congress to maximise its electoral benefits. The ruling Congress

party which played its abusive games - in influencing the Delimitation Commission with favour. The study reveals that the Congress party has intentionally tried to identify a particular constituency as reserved. It identified Agra West and Jalesar assembly constituency as reserved for the Scheduled Castes when they felt that this would help them in solving its inner party schisms. The political parties made use of the electoral institutions like reserved constituency to acquire and consolidate their political power even at the cost of disturbing the administrative integration of the reserved constituency.

We found that the Scheduled Castes of Jalesar and Agra are socially as well as economically backward. They still perform their traditional occupations. The study shows that among the Scheduled Castes the socio-economic condition of the Jatavs of Agra is relatively better than other sub-groups of Scheduled Castes of Jalesar and Agra. The Jatavs of Agra were politically organised even before independence. In 1917, they organised Jatav Mahasabha and succeeded in appointing Bohre Khem Chand as the Member of the U.P. Legislative Council in 1920. In 1937, Jatav Mahasabha organised the "All India Jatav Youth League" and succeeded in changing their community's name from "Chamar to Jatav" and later in 1939 it was recognised officially by the British Government. Jatavs of Agra took inspiration from the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar and participated in the Scheduled Castes

movement initiated by him. Through such activities they could become politically conscious and started participating in the political process. This explains the political dominance of Jatav community over other Scheduled Caste groups. The political leadership of the Scheduled Castes of Agra West reserved assembly constituency always remained with Jatavs.

Compared to Jatavs, other caste groups remained at a very low level with regard to political participation. Besides the fact that the numerical strength of these communities was over shadowed by that of the Jatavs, certain historical and socio-economic factors also played an important role in their present backwardness at the political sphere.

Increased political consciousness and active participation in the political processes can enable a community to better represent their interests is one point that our case study of Agra West reserved constituency brings forth. We saw the ascendancy of Republican Party of India (RPI), even reaching to the second largest party position in Agra. Under the banner of RPI, Jatavs could even win three general assembly constituencies of Agra District. RPI could maintain its political strength till 1980. The internal conflicts within the Jatav community itself and non-acceptance of Jatav leadership by other caste groups caused

the gradual disintegration of RPI. The fall of RPI was also due to the manipulative practices of other political parties which were dominated by the upper castes. As we saw in our study the upper castes always tried to divide the Scheduled Castes whenever they had to face from them serious threats to their dominance.

During the course of our study it became clear to us that the dependence on various political parties by the Scheduled Castes has been a major problem in the political consolidation of these deprived sections of society. As a result whatever achievements one section among Scheduled Castes could make was by way of 'sponsored mobility'. Scheduled Caste community could never make a choice on their own about who should represent them in the Legislative bodies. We saw very clearly that as far as the reserved constituencies are concerned it is the upper castes who decided the outcome of an election. The fact that the Scheduled Caste communities do not present even a semblance of homogeneity made the upper caste machinations an easy task. The sheer numerical strength of upper castes in some reserved constituencies like Jalesar, made the Scheduled Castes dependent on them for electoral victory.

We could see that the Thakurs in Jalesar constituency are a decisive factor for the electoral success of a Scheduled Caste candidate. As there was a conflict between

Thakurs and Jatavs, the political parties preferred non-Jatav candidates. According to the whims of the non-scheduled Castes the political leadership of the Scheduled Castes were made to shift from one caste to another. For example, in Jalesar constituency it moved from Agaria to Dhobi to Nut. This was because, unlike in Agra West constituency, in Jalesar constituency there is no numerical predominance of a particular Scheduled Caste group.

In the case of Jalesar reserved constituency the traditional feudal character of its politics is still reflected in the attitudes of the Scheduled Castes towards non-Scheduled Castes. Even today, in some parts of Jalesar the Thakurs are known as Rajas. They have major influence in the politics of Jalesar. The Thakurs are numerically large in number than all the other castes in Jalesar. These factors made Thakurs of the region socially better off and politically more advantageous. This resulted in a forceful impact on the voting behaviour of Jalesar constituency. The economic factor also played a major role in a Scheduled Caste candidates victory. As they lacked financial resources the dependence on non-scheduled castes and political parties became all the more necessary for electoral victory.

In general we found in our study the political parties select only 'yes-men' among the Scheduled Castes. As a result, we can conclude that it was those Scheduled Caste

leaders who did not have any mass base in the constituency and who did not have any commitment towards their society that come up as the representative of Scheduled Castes. The general indifference towards participation in the electoral process by the Scheduled Castes also could be observed. In Jalesar reserved assembly constituency the political activities were done largely by the upper castes, though in Agra West reserved assembly constituency the jatavs participated in the political activities.

The present study revealed that the political process is less competitive in Jalesar assembly constituency. Participation of the Scheduled Castes in the political activities in Jalesar is less than in Agra west. Our study proved that political factionalism is a common phenomenon in Agra West and Jalesar constituencies. The main reason for this is generally in reserved constituencies each caste wants to capture political power. That is why the Scheduled Castes get divided into different groups. So they depend on political parties and the upper caste people. It is concluded that the provision of reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes' political development, does not lead them to create an independent identity for themselves in politics. While this provision helped a few Scheduled Caste leaders to get political benefits, this device has been proved to be an insufficient one to encourage the Scheduled Castes as a whole

for political participation. The study shows that the socio-economic factors operating in a constituency play an important role in the development of a well organised political network. Since the Scheduled Castes of Jalesar reserved assembly constituency lacked in these sources, they were unable to create an effective political network of their own in the constituency.

Under the system of reserved constituency, because the political mobility of the Scheduled Castes is patronised by the political parties, the Scheduled Caste leaders are more responsible to the party which they represent and less responsible to the community they belong.

Even after four decades of political reservation for the Scheduled Castes, they are still politically quite backward. For the advancement of these neglected people their socio-economic and educational development becomes very essential. Political reservation has helped a section or a strata of the Scheduled Caste population in its upward mobility, as in the case of the Jatavs of Agra.

The emergence of political forces like BSP in the 1980s and 1990s also explains this fact of change thanks to the reservation policy. The BSP is trying to forge unity among the different sections among the Dalits to check the dominance of higher castes. It is very necessary to delimit reserved constituencies under Article 82 of the Constitution after

every Census. The fact that the Scheduled Castes are a geographically dispersed community which makes a system of rotation in respect of reserved constituencies very helpful to the interests of the Scheduled Castes. Such rotation will provide an opportunity to a larger section of Scheduled Castes to represent their communities. The system of rotation will lead to distribution and dispersal of the benefits of reservation all over the country. The objectives of political reservation might get defeated if the system of rotation is not followed since the permanent identification of reserved constituencies makes democracy meaningless to the bulk of the voters belonging to non-Scheduled Castes in reserved constituencies and Scheduled Castes in non-reserved constituencies.

The rotation of constituencies and their dispersal would not only facilitate the Scheduled Caste people from various parts of the country to avail opportunities to contest the elections, it would also provide opportunities for general candidates to contest the elections from the de-reserved constituencies. The continued system of political reservation cannot solve the problems of Scheduled Castes. Social and Economic transformation of the society in general and the Scheduled Castes in particular alone can help the Scheduled Castes to attain their basic rights and necessities which, in fact, was the foremost goal of our Constitution.

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