

**THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY :
IDEOLOGY, LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE**

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Certificate

Certified that the dissertation entitled, *THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY: IDEOLOGY, LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE*, Submitted by **Mr. Anirudh Kumar Prasad** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University and is his own Work.

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PREFACE

In the recent years, Politics in India has observed a new trend of coalitional politics. In the light of this phenomenon the emergence of BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and few other pockets of the country is an important political development.

An investigation into the nature and development of BSP is significant to understand the present Indian party system in its totality. As this area has remained largely unexplored, it is of great relevance to study BSP. An attempt has been made in this study to explore the causes of its emergence on sociological map, its continuing relevance, future prospects, which are based on thorough examination of the social base of its leadership, the party's electoral performance and critical analysis of its ideology.

Because of lack of much work in this area, it was slightly difficult to gather important and relevant data about the profile of its leadership, documents and results of various levels of elections contested by the party.

As a result this study suffers from some shortcomings such as non-availability of full and detailed election results of 1989 and 1991 elections, thus making it difficult to make a comparative study.

Moreover, all possible attempt have been made to minimise and overcome such shortcomings. I hope this study will be useful to those students of social sciences who are interested in complete and detailed study of the BSP.

I am extremely thankful to my supervisor, Prof. S.N.Jha, who with his advice and cooperation equiped me with requiried insights and perspective of the subject at all stages of my study. But for his esteemed guidance this work would not have seen the light of the day. I am also thankful to Prof. A.K.Ray, Chairperson, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, who rendered all possible help. In the last I express my gratitude to my friends Rajesh Ranjan and Shobhan Sexena for their valuable help in the completion of this study.

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CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

A shift from dominant party system to coalitional politics is a major feature of Indian politics. This shift is because of the fact that socio-economic and demographic profile of the polity is changing fast. Mobilization of new groups into the political process has given rise to the development of new and more differentiated identities and pattern of political cleavage. "This gave rise to the expectation of free political access and a greater insistence on government performance. Intermediaries and vote banks, while of continuing importance, have become increasingly circumvented as citizens, search for more effective participation in the political arena and develop an ability to evaluate and make choice." ¹

The period of 1967 in Indian politics was a watershed when one party dominance received the first jolt. Before 1967, India had a party system characterised by " dominance coexisting with competition but without a trace of alternation,"² because opposition parties had little hope of

1. Rajni Kothari, "Continuity and change in the Indian Party System," *Asian Survey* (November 1970), p.939.

2. W. H. Morris-Jones, "Parliament and Dominant Party : The Indian Experience," and *Dominance and Dissent : Their inter-Relations in the Indian Party System*, in Morris-Jones, *Politics Mainly Indian* (Madras : Orient Longman, 1970), pp. 196-232.

preventing the Congress from obtaining sizable majorities in the legislatures despite the ruling party's failure on most occasions, to gain a majority of the valid votes. Neither did opposition parties share power in coalitions with the Congress at state level. So here was a "competitive party system in which the competing parts play rather dissimilar roles,"³ The Congress was "a party of consensus" and opposition parties were "parties of pressure."⁴ The opposition instead of providing an alternative to the Congress functioned by influencing sections within the Congress. The Congress was able to maintain its position as a party occupying most of the space in the political system because there was plurality within the dominant party which made it more representative, provided flexibility and sustained internal competition. At the same time, it was prepared to absorb groups and movements from outside the party and thus prevented other parties from gaining strength. The task of creating and sustaining the immensely broad Congress and ambiguities of Indian society, which prevented polarization and the formation of contradictions that might fracture such an all-embracing alliance of interests. This

3. James Manor, "Parties and Party System," in Atul Kohli (ed.), *India's Democracy* (New Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.64.

4. Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India," *Asian Survey* (December 1964).

insight differs from but complements Myron Weiner's argument that the task of building the Congress coalition was helped by traditional values and roles of conciliation that Congressmen astutely took up,⁵ and the Rudolph's contention that traditional elements of the caste system assisted the development of modern, representative politics of India.⁶

But howsoever much of the social background may have helped, and howsoever important Congress role in the winning of Independence may have been in placing the party in a dominant position in the first place, the survival of Congress dominance depended on the efficient functioning of the party organisation. Of crucial importance was its effectiveness in distributing the resources, which it required from its control of state power, among existing and potential clients in exchange for their political support. This management of resources, at which many within the Congress Organization excelled, was essential to the proper functioning of the "conciliation machinery within Congress, at various levels and for different tasks which was almost

5. Myron Weiner, "Traditional Role Performance and Development of Modern Political Parties : The Indian Case," *Journal of Politics* (November 1964), pp.830-849.

6. Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition : Political Development in India* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1967), p.1.

constantly in operation, mediating in factional disputes influencing political decisions, in the states and districts."⁷

The same skill at allotting patronage also enabled Congress to co-opt and absorb within itself groups whose grievances had "been ventilated through agitations launched by the opposition parties." This was reinforced by Congress "policy of neutralizing some of the more important sources of cleavage and disaffection" and by the leadership's tendency" to preserve democratic forms, to respect the rule of law to avoid undue strife" to show "great sensitivity on the question of respect for minorities."⁸

Morris-Jones emphasized the emergence of "a market polity" in India. This was nothing very new. "There was plenty of competition and bargaining before 1967 but it had taken place largely within Congress, between groups and in semi-institutionalized form."⁹ In 1967 election which saw Congress lose power in six states, the competition had grown too severe to be contained by the party's internal bargaining, so that "dissident congressmen played an important role in weakeing the party in perhaps every 'lost'

7. Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India," *Asian Survey* (December 1964).

8. *Ibid.*

9. W.H. Morris-Jones, "From Monopoly to Competition in India's Politics," in Morris-Jones, *Politics Mainly Indian* (Madras : Orient Longman, 1978), p.154.

state except Tamil Nadu."¹⁰ This brought a number of opposition parties fully into the market place, and competition that had previously occurred within Congress was brought into the realm of inter-party conflict. Competition also increased in as much as opposition parties formed coalition Government in every state they controlled except Tamil Nadu which required intense political bargaining.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's victory in 1971 election made it appear that the end of Congress dominance was too readily proclaimed in 1967 and that "now it is back." This led naturally to expect that the opposition parties would be forced to operate less by confrontation than by interaction with segments of the centre mass. Mrs Gandhi adopted a more confrontational posture both towards the opposition parties at the national level and towards opposition controlled Governments in various states. She also took a more aggressive line with her own party and this soon produced what Kochanek has rightly called "a new political process," as the Prime Minister created "a pyramidal decision making structures in the party and Government."¹¹

10. Ibid.

11. James Manor, "Parties and Party System," in Athul Kohli (ed.), *India's Democracy* (Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.70.

Moreover, the new political process proved insufficient to manage the tensions and cleavages of a heterogeneous party operating in a federally governed heterogeneous society, a major crisis in the system followed.

Indian Politics after 1977 was of abrasive conflict and confrontation between political parties and a period marked by decay and fragmentation within parties. James Manor identified two great themes of India's politics which will provide the context essential to an understanding of the changes within parties and party system.¹²

The two themes which had become plainly evident before 1977 and which dominated the period after that were awakening and decay. The awakening occurred among the great mass of India's voters, as people at all levels of society became increasingly aware of the logic of electoral politics of ballot, and of the notion that parties and leaders should respond to those whom they represented. It was more advanced among the prosperous people, but it also occurred among the common people. As a result, disadvantaged rural dwellers largely ceased to vote according to the wishes of the landowning groups (or what is referred in the lexicon of psephology as casting vote on the basis of patron client-relationships) that continued to dominate life in the villages. Voters became more assertive and competitive and their appetites for resources from

12. James Manor, "Parties and Party System," in Atul Kohli (ed.), *India's Democracy* (Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.72.

politicians grew. The interest groups crystallized and came increasingly into conflict, so that it became harder to operate a political machine that could cater to every organized interest, as Congress had very nearly done in the Nehru years. Thus segmentation in political structure occurred in quiet significant way. India became increasingly democratic and difficult to govern.

The second theme that marked this period was the decay of political institutions, a decline in the capacity of institutions to respond rationally, creatively, or even adequately to pressures from 'society' and contribute in the larger scheme of 'modernisation' and 'nation building.' This decay affected both the formal institutions of state as also political parties, including the Congress party. It was partly the result of systemic problems of ossification within the party. But it was, quite substantially the result of the tendency of Mrs Gandhi and her associates to centralize power and to deinstitutionalize. The awakening of the electorate and the decay of institutions led to the generation of some changes as byproducts.

The first of these was a change in the way the elections were won and lost, or to put it more plainly, a change from the days before 1972, when incumbent governments at the state and national levels usually won re-election, to a period in which they usually lost. This follows quite logically, for the decay of ruling parties and the formal institutions through which they govern has meant that

incumbents have been less able to respond to society at a time when the expectations and assertiveness of the electorate have increasingly demanded responses.

The second change was a marked decline in confidence in the state as an agency capable of creative social action (as opposed to an agency with the coercive power to maintain order). This occurred within the Congress led by Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. It was demonstrated by Mrs. Gandhi's abandonment of reformist rhetoric in the election of 1980 and of serious attempts to create legislation for the betterment of society between 1980 to 1984, and by Rajiv Gandhi's preference for the private sector. But this decline was also observable within many opposition parties, among many intellectual who were critical of Mrs Gandhi, and among large numbers of people in local arenas across the sub-continent.

The third change was the tendency for society and politics to diverge. As political institutions especially political parties, became less able to respond rationally to appeals that arose from society, social groups tended to give up on politics and politicians, and to turn inward, battering on parochial sentiments and whatever internal resources they possessed. This led to an increase in conflict between social groups as the social political divergence and the decay of political institutions reduced the states capacity to manage and defuse conflicts.

The next change entailed the blurring of the relatively clear lines that had existed between many political parties, and their bases, both at the national level and in many Indian states. This was a destabilizing and potentially destructive trend, particularly as the awakening of the electorate made it more important than ever that parties develop solid, distinct and clearly perceived links to social bases of manageable size.

The last was a growing divergence between the logic, of politics at the national level and the political logic in various state arenas. The most obvious sign of this was the emergence of regional parties in several states in the early 1980s. But even within the Congress and even during the Emergency, the state level units often went their own way. This, like the appearance of regional opposition parties, was an unintended result of the excessive centralization of power by Mrs. Gandhi.

From the above analysis and description it could safely be said that the Indian political processes created enough space or fertile ground in which parties like BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY (BSP) could emerge and flourish. In nutshell, the failure and inability of the Congress party in performing its traditional duty of mixing tradition with modernity thereby failing in the primary duty of a party i.e. aggregating and articulating demands coupled with growth of elite politics and de-institutionalization on a massive scale led to the growth of party like BSP and all

such political organisations based on grassroots assertion on the stasiological map of the country.

A Brief History of Dalit Politics:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of Scheduled Caste, formed the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1937 with the broader base. Although it was dominated by the Mahars, the ILP claimed to be the party of the labour class. It made an impressive show in the 1937 Bombay Legislative Assembly elections, when 15 of its 17 candidates won their seats. It made a poor show in the 1952 elections, when Caste Hindus made up the majority of voters in every constituency. "Again and again, the Scheduled Caste Federation got the Mahar votes in large numbers, again and again its members were defeated by the votes of the Caste Hindu majority."¹³ In 1957, the Republican Party was formed on the model of the earlier, ILP. In the 1962 elections, the party contested 68 parliamentary seats and won three, all in Uttar Pradesh, it contested 301 Assembly seats and won 11, three in Maharashtra and eight in U.P. In the subsequent elections, it made a poor show and in time, the party split into factions. The Scheduled Castes as a group, have very little

13. Lelah Dushkin, "Scheduled Caste Politics," in *The Untouchables in Contemporary India as Quoted in Ghanshyam Shah, 'Grass Root Mobilization in Indian Politics'* in Athul Kohli (ed.), *India's Democracy* (New Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.272.

opportunity to win the battle in electoral politics because they are a minority in the constituencies, i.e. their population are evenly distributed. Moreover, their leaders have been co-opted by different parties in an effort to gain the support of Scheduled Caste votes.

The Scheduled Castes offered Satyagrah demanding separate electorates before the state legislators at Poona, Nagpur, Lucknow and Kanpur in 1946. They also organised a Morcha in 1965 to the council house, Bombay, "against the single member constituency." Thus Scheduled Castes like other castes, organised themselves to achieve social progress and to protest against the oppression by landlords, police and other government officers. A number of scattered and spontaneous agitations were launched by Scheduled Castes during the post-Independence period, demanding higher wages, distribution of land and the cessation of atrocities inflicted by landlords. For instance, two massive land Satyagrahs were offered in Maharashtra in 1954 demanding distribution of wasteland to the landless Harijan. Their agitations were in addition to a number of Scheduled Caste sponsored land grab movements in Maharashtra, U.P. and in Bihar in the mid-1960s. Confrontations between Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers and land owning classes have been frequent in UP, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra. Various demands have been put forward during the last decade that include issues

related to identity, economic injustice, and due recognition of the contribution made by Dr. Ambedkar.

With the change in overall situation in post-Independence period and rise in education among small sections of Harijans, small entrepreneurs and a white-collar middle class have emerged among the Scheduled Castes. These have become militant and call themselves "Dalits", i.e. "a poor and exploited class," imitating the Black Panthers of U.S.A., they have formed the Dalit Panthers, a militant organizations of SCs.

Like the elites of the backward castes, the elites of Scheduled Castes have been won over and co-opted by the Congress and other parties for electoral politics.

With the end of the one party dominance much of the political bargaining in the country being under taken not by established political parties but by social groups and formations is at best marginal to the main-stream concerns. Yet it is these groups and formations which seem to be shaping the national agenda as much as the political parties.

In 1984, in the name of Bahujan Samaj Party, a new political pressure group emerged on the national scene. A group that represents the interests of the most down-trodden sections of our society : The Scheduled Castes and the backward communities. The sectors that are numerically very large and have potential to become the very powerful force in Indian politics. To lead them is Mr. Kashi Ram, 60,

a former scientific officer from the Defence Research and Development Laboratories in Pune, who gave up his job in 1965 to devote his life to this cause. For the past many years he has hit the campaign trail; Organising a large cross-section of senior bureaucrats, government employees and village folk in the crucial political constituency of North India.

It is obvious that this party does meet the basic requirement in so far as it is making a demand on the political system and is not averse to influencing electoral competition among the established parties. It has also passed another essential test, i.e. it has taken many more initiatives than the established political parties to extract concession from an administrative set up, which is all too enamored of the trappings of a modern state and palpably disdainful of the political process. Judging from the kind of agitation this party has launched and concessions it has won, it is apparent that the majority of the mainstream political parties are deeply preoccupied with electoral concerns and calculations. This is making them irrelevant to the social and economic problems in country.

How then, does one account for the growth and assertiveness of a party like the BSP ? This phenomenon is to be seen in the wider context of the failures of two significant attempts made to influence the system from the above. The first is usually described as the Naxalite uprising which sought to use instruments of violence and

coercion in order to overthrow the system which created a cleavage between the minority of vested and entrenched interests and the majority of the dispossessed and deprived. The second challenge came from so called Non-Governmental Movement, which sought to make the political and social order a little more humane and a little less unfair. This was markedly different from the earlier Gandhian tradition of constructive works. The Non-Governmental Organisation opted for a mix of agitational and petitioning strategies along with arousing public consciousness. However, given the enormity of the task and the limitations of talents and the resources, the NGO have, at best, succeeded in having only a marginal impact, necessarily localized, without in anyway influencing the terms of political exchange at the macro-level.

The BSP and its leaders use idioms and rhetorical expressions which are not to the liking of the main political parties. The BSP leaders makes no bones about their strictly casteist political strategy. They recognise the importance of caste as a factor. Before addressing election meetings, not infrequently, BSP leaders were heard telling Brahmins, Rajputs and Baniyas in the crowd to leave. One of thier slogan has been " Brahmin, Rajput, Baniya Chor, Baki sab hain DS4" (leaving aside Brahmins, Rajput & Baniya, all are DS4) DS4 means Dalit Soshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti. It was DS4 which gave birth to BSP in 1984.

The point to be understood is that the efficacy of a party that speaks exclusively in the name of Dr. Ambedkar, upliftment of Harijans or demanding protection of small farmers, daily wages workers, implementation of reservation and other welfare policies etc., is directly related to the failures of the Congress of other national parties to address these issues. Political parties have become non issue oriented and any leader seeking to highlight the problems of a particular societal segment is immediately discussed as castiest or sectarian or romanticist . Perhaps the major reason for the assertiveness of the BSP has been the frontal assault mounted by Rajiv Gandhi on the Congress party. After he denounced in no uncertain terms, at the Bombay session in Dec.1985, the message was loud and clear that the premier political organisation in the country was no longer to be trusted as a vehicle for channelising the social aspirations, discontent and the anxieties of the groups. In fact , the dynamics of the Congress party and its internal equations changed so drastically that it was obvious to most politically conscious people that the normal process of democratic give and take, interest articulation and pressure building was no longer feasible. An equally unhealthy development was that the total domination that Rajiv Gandhi came to enjoy vis-a-vis the Congressmen and the Congress party was reflected in the behavior of the mainstream opposition parties. Most of them were at loss to understand the Rajiv phenomenon which was so distinctly

non-political, if not a political. For various reasons the mainstream opposition parties too fell into an obsessive preoccupation with Rajiv Gandhi and his style of approaching the social and political problems.

The growth of BSP is also a revolt against the obsessive preoccupation in electoral politics of our leading political parties. The extent to which the musclemen and the moneybags now count in the calculation of national mainstream parties, the emergence of BSP should serve a healthy antidote to the creeping distortions in polity.

The leadership pattern of BSP is not very different from the leadership pattern of any other protest movement. Most of the leaders of protest movement have very little use for quality or democratic decision making. Many of them do not even have the sanctioned legitimacy of institutional decision making since their leaders find it difficult to operate within the frame work of collective democratic functioning. Many of them find institutional or organizational restraints irritating and tiresome and though it is fashionable to condemn Rajiv Gandhi and Congress party for being totally devoid of any internal democracy, smaller parties like BSP function even more arbitrarily. But like all protest movements, leaders of BSP do inspire the rank and file to have faith in their leadership, primarily because they have managed to create among their followers a perception of blocked social mobility.

While BSP and its leaders would ^{fail to meet the rigorous} test of being guided by a well defined ideology, they do have a defined world view that is very much in conflict with that of the decision makers in New Delhi ^{and} most state capitals.

CHAPTER - II
THE IDEOLOGY OF B.S.P.

In a democratic political system, mobilization plays an important role and it has proved successful in India too. During the independence movement Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar mobilised people to liberate them from the colonial yoke and ^{inhuman living conditions} fostered by a Brahminical caste system. After independence people were mobilised by providing universal franchise to make democracy successful and successful governance of the country. People were mobilised on ideological lines especially that of nationalism, patriotism and above all on centrist ideology. The Congress followed a centrist ideology of secularism, socialism and democracy and centrist policies epitomized in mixed-economy and a pluralist basis of support that encompassed a wide spectrum of interests, classes, status groups, regions and communities. People were also mobilised on caste and community basis as it was done by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to create a third force in order to liberate them from their present conditions. Mobilization of people was speeded up on one ideology or other because of many reasons and one of them was the failure of these centrist parties to address the problems of these people. Dr. Ambedkar mobilised his supporters to demand for separate electorate which was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Dalit Movement derives its strength from criticism of Gandhi. It is only through establishing distinct identity (distinct from the Congress) that they hope to rally their people. According to them when the Congress gave concessions to them, they were in the form of charity or alms without recognising the fact that such concessions are their legitimate claims. Justice could be possible only if power come in their hand and they ^{should} themselves decide what is good or bad for them. They feel that under the Gandhian and Congress (both are inextricably interlinked) scheme no fundamental change in the structure (i.e. Brahminical order) and their dignity and self respect could come. Thus, it seems imperative to deal elaborately what happened between Gandhi and Ambedkar and trace out the point of difference between these two leaders. How the word Gandhi is an anathema to the BSP was evident on 15 March 1991 when some of its followers allegedly desecrated the Samadhi of Gandhi at Rajghat.

Despite denials by BSP president Mr. Kanshi Ram, it may not be coincidence that those involved in the Rajghat and affront happened to be the followers of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The incident revived memories of acrimony between Gandhi and Ambedkar over the upliftment of untouchables, dating back to the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931 in which Gandhi vehemently opposed Ambedkar's demand for separate electorate for Dalits. The intense feeling of the Dalits against Gandhi was manifested by a black-flag

demonstration on his return to Bombay after attending the conference.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar himself never minced words when it came to criticising Gandhi. He said, " I insist that if I dislike Gandhi, it is because I love India more... The worship of Gandhi and service to India are two very different things and may even be contradictory of each other."¹ In another scathing comment he said. " I hate all the mahatmas and firmly believe that they should be done away with. I am of a opinion that their existence is a curse to the nation in which they are born. They try to perpetuate blind faith in place of intelligence and reason."²

In 1932, the Communal Award of the British government granted separate electorates for the depressed classes. Gandhi went on fast unto death in his prison cell in Poona protesting that separate electorates were a device which would separate the untouchables from Hindu society forever. As Gandhi weakened, Ambedkar capitulated, but only when some Hindu leader pledged their help in the removal of untouchability, and agreed that the untouchables would have reserved seats in all the elected bodies. Ambedkar, however

1. V. Venkatesan, "BSP : Behind the Signs of Militancy," *Times of India*, (New Delhi), 2 April 1991.

2. Ibid.

never reconciled to this outcome as according to him it forced the Dalits to agree to live at the mercy of the Hindus. Subsequent events show that Gandhi was wrong when he claimed in August 1934 that "untouchability was on its last legs."³

It is not without significance that Ambedkar, did not react to Gandhi's assassination in 1948. Says Ambedkar's biographer, Dhananjay Keer : " Hard facts had galled him, and his old bitterness too, had not cooled down. He did not utter publicly a syllable on this tragedy; nor did he issue any statement Perhaps he thought that the mighty personality in Gandhi had choked the free passage of Indian democracy. It was said that he was put in mind of the pithy remarks of Cicero who had exclaimed at the news of Caesar's murder that the dawn of liberation had come."⁴

The bitterness of Ambedkar's followers may perhaps not have come to the fore had the governments since the Independence taken determined steps to ameliorate the condition of the Dalits. Despite constitutional and legal safeguards little change has taken place in the lives of the Dalits. According to Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, there are many areas where these weaker sections are denied even access to drinking water. There has been a sharp increase in the atrocities on them, and

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.



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their socio-economic condition is fast deteriorating.

Strangely, this has been accompanied by the emasculation of the Dalit movement. Historically, the acceptance of the Poona Pact of 1932 has meant that in no constituency in India would the Dalits form more than 30 per cent of the electorate. Consequently, they have had to depend on the mainstream political parties to attract Caste Hindu and other voters. In the past, this has also discouraged the emergence of a new and independent Dalit leaders after Ambedkar.

The Dalit movement has never benefitted from mere electoral participation. It would be useful to consider the record of Ambedkar's first political party, the Independent Labour Party, which was born with great optimism to fight the elections of 1937, the first in which the Scheduled Castes had designated seats. It won 11 out of the 15 seats reserved for the SCs in the Bombay province. The Congress won the rest. But Ambedkar's electoral success was of no use in passing legislation as a lonely minority in a legislature dominated by a majority party. The party was second only to the Muslim League as an opposition party to the Congress in Bombay, and it functioned with vigour but to little effect. Not even the protest against the use of Gandhi's term for untouchables, 'Harijan' was heard.

Problem of the Dalits

Dr. Ambedkar too realised after his defeat in the 1952 general elections that the problems of Dalits could not be solved by a caste-based party. Hence he wanted to convert the then-existing Scheduled Caste Federation into a broad-based party. This did not happen during his life time. After his death, his followers simply renamed Scheduled Caste Federation as Republican Party of India, but failed to achieve the unity of all the oppressed classes as desired by him.

How far has the steady progress of the BSP since its inception in 1984 fuelled hopes for the dalit movement ? The BSP's electoral performance in the recent past has underlined two facts. First, BSP's fortunes improve in a hung parliament. Secondly, by making conscious efforts to wean away backward classes and religious minorities from the vote-banks of other parties, the BSP is risking the support of its original constituency. Earlier Mr. Kanshi Ram had likened major parties as snakes with varying degrees of venom. His subsequent vacillation over the Mandal Commission recommendations and his new-found enthusiasm for Mr. V.P.Singh's brand of social justice, show that he is indulging in the same compromise politics which he accused the Republican Party of India of, after parting company with it.

In the contemporary Indian politics where no political party is in a position to have majority in the parliament or state assembly except Rajiv Gandhi government in 1985, the support of SC/ST, Muslims and other minorities becomes essential for any party to remain in power and Congress has been successful because it has been able to co-opt the leaders of these communities within its fold . In India where politics is mass based, the important thing is to articulate support through the organisation in which the masses are to be found, it follows that where caste structure and group solidarity provides one of the principle organisational cluster along which the bulk of the population is found and live. At every point of time there have been attempts to mobilise 'Dalits' and it was extended to Muslims and other minorities by Dr. Ambedkar to create a third force and now these people are mobilised by one Dalit ideology and BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY is one of them. This party is led by Mr. Kanshi Ram and it is inspired by Ambedkarite philosophy and speaks about the past atrocities on and prevailing conditions of Dalits and means of uplifting them. Speaking about the condition of these people is not new. In the past many social reformers have already tried their best to uplift them and put an end to the prevailing inhuman practices. During the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi in order to mobilise people, tried to end untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar argued that political revolution is of little use for us without social revolution. Mr K. Ram wants to create

a Bahujan Samaj by appealing to SCs, STs, Muslims, O.B.Cs and other minorities on the basis of Dalit ideology. The political philosophy and action plan that Mr. K.Ram has been putting forward for the past eight years is built on some straight-forward premises. Democracy means the rule of the majority. According to him the majority comprises of SCs, STs, OBCs, Muslims and other minorities but this majority is ruled by a few upper castes notably the Brahmins, who comprises a minority of 10 to 15 percent of the population which is a ridiculous situation according to K.Ram. This kind of criticism is akin to the Marxist criticism of the bourgeoisie democracy where minority bourgeois rules over the majority consisting of proletariat. The 85 percent of the population can become the ruler the day they realize the difference between being governed and being rulers and so there is need to unite together to become a force and say 'No' to parties like Congress who are Brahminical by nature and are interested in maintaining status quo. According to Mr. K.Ram, the benefit gained by Congress was of temporary nature because the people oppressed for centuries have realised that what they need is not only social and economic equality but also share in political power. Dr. Ambedkar saw advancement of the untouchables in terms of using political means to achieve social and economic equality with the highest classes in a modern society while on the other hand Mahatma Gandhi held a more traditional concept of a Varna system, cleansed of

untouchability, in which untouchables would be shudras and this, unclean work made honourable.

According to Mr. K.Ram, the BSP sees no difference between the philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar, the emancipation of untouchables and the philosophy of the Constitution enshrined in the Preamble. The BSP thinks of bringing about a new social order based on the sublime principle of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Different political parties have prescribed various ways and means but most of them agree on the point that the deliverance of the oppressed and exploited population is possible only through 'Socialism' which is also there in the Preamble of the Constitution.

In BSP's view, socialism can really transform the caste-ridden Indian society. The main obstacle in working out the socialistic revolution in India is the structure of the Indian society. Plurality of languages, customs, religions and races have kept the Indian working class divided on all fronts. There is no denying, that though India has emerged as a nation politically through Independence after a long spell of colonial rule, the evils of the four ordered Varna system have kept the Indian masses divided in various ways. They point out that due to compromise of the bourgeoisie with the feudal system, their role in bringing about a social and cultural revolution for the democratization of the society remained unplayed for which integration of various races and linguistic and

religious minorities was not possible and remain^{ed} incomplete, on the account of the adverse impact of caste system, religious bigotry and due to perfect neglect in carrying out the indispensable social and cultural revolution against exploitation and superstition, the Indian masses have come to maintain their existence only in separate communities and groups on religious, linguistic and caste considerations; for which the cause of achievement of socialistic revolution is at stake today.

The BSP points out that it was Dr. Ambedkar who cautioned against the obstacle in the way of socialism from the beginning, and fought for the cause of oppressed and exploited Indian masses. An Englishman said of him in 1932, "I think we may accept Dr. Ambedkar as the most important leader and accredited spokesman of the depressed classes. None of the local leaders have either his education, forensic ability, or pugnacity and his recent conduct during the Mahatma Gandhi's fast, the extraordinarily favorable agreement which he exacted from Hindu negotiators, reveal him as a political tactician of quality."⁵ Dr. Ambedkar declared in unequivocal terms that political reforms in

 5. John Coatman, "In a Speech before the East India Association" as Quoted in Eleanor Zelliot, Learning the use of Political Means : The Mahars of Maharashtra, in Rajni Kothari (ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1991), p.49.

India would never be possible before a radical change and reform of the Indian Social structure. He added, "It is only in a Swaraj Constitution that you stand any chance of getting political powers in to your own hands without which you cannot bring salvation to your people"⁶ but he found it necessary to continue to press for political safeguards for Depressed classes while British continued to rule India, distrusting that those who put independence, above social reform would allow the untouchables equality. He paved the way by demolishing the superstructure of superstition, encouraging intercaste marriages in preference to the caste system and establishing equal rights of property both for man and woman in Hindu Code Bill. His despair knew no bounds when he grew alive to sense that there is no worthy followers to translate his revolutionary ideals into actions during his life time. This prompted him to adopt the principle of mass religious conversion as the quickest means of liberation of the neglected millions of the country. "For a man it is his birth right to lead an honorable life, to achieve this aim we must do our utmost, we are prepared to make the greatest sacrifice for this. "We are struggling for

6. 'All India Depressed Classes Conference,' The Indian Annual Register, Nripendra Nath Mishra, editor, 1930, as Quoted in Eleanor Zelliot : Learning the use of Political Means : The Mahars of Maharashtra in Rajni Kothari, (ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.46.

human dignity which Hindus denied us. We want to make our life as full and whole-some as possible."⁷ Birth was not in my hand but I will not die as a Hindu, he said.

"His mission of life was to build a free, healthy and humanistic nation out of the people of India by effecting a radical reform in the worhout structure of the society and state."⁸ He made it sure that all citizens of this country are provided with :

JUSTICE , Social, Economic, Political

LIBERTY ' Of thought, Expression, Belief, Faith

EQUALITY , Of Status and of opportunity

The Bahujan Samaj Party claims itself to be Ambedkarite. For them, the Indian constitution is the philosophy as well as an instrument to achieve that philosophy because it has been carefully drafted by Dr. Ambedkar. It is under the Constitution itself that untouchables are recognised as 'Human beings' and untouchability is abolished and its practice is made punishable. It is this constitution which has envisaged fundamental rights to them along with many more benefits. It has been the hope of the great leaders of the country that

7. R.Sangeetha Rao, *SCEWASTAMB, Handbook on Weaker Sections as Third Force* (New Delhi : 1987), p.52, Privately Printed.

8. Sudhir Ranjan Das, "Liberation of the Oppressed-Ambedkarism is the Solution," *National Seminar on Marx, Ambedkar and Polarisation of Oppressed and Exploited Classes in India* (New Delhi : Blumoon Services, 1991), p.112.

with the achievement of independence and enactment of the constitution, the social and economic inequalities would disappear and planning would bring economic and social equality, fraternity and justice to all the sections of the society. To achieve these objectives the cardinal principles of Socialism, Secularism and Democracy have been made the basis of the Constitution of India. The Constitution provides special safeguards for the SCs, STs, BCs including minorities. Article 15 and 16 provides for the discriminatory equality. Article 17 abolished the practice of untouchability. Article 332 provides for reservation for weaker sections. Article 46 asks the state to protect the weaker section from exploitation and to promote their economic interest with special care. Article 16(4) provides for adequate representation for weaker section in the organs of the state as a measure of guarantee against the discrimination and denial of rights and civilised life to this communities as was being done for the past 200 years. Minorities are provided certain safeguards of freedom of faith, conscience and worship to preserve their own culture and languages. It is aimed at building a Socialistic pattern of society based on their participation both in private and public sectors. In this direction several measures like land reforms, implementation of minimum wages act, civil rights protection act 1953, Constitution of the Nation Integration council, preservation of tribal culture and languages have been taken up. In the views of Bahujan Samaj Party it was

because of Dr. Ambedkar that the depressed classes could now assert this basic rights as it was put into the Constitution by him because he was not willing to leave it at the mercy of the Caste Hindus.

One of the main feature of BSP's ideology is the slogan : "Educate, Agitate and organise,"⁹ which they have taken from Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar who coined this slogan asked his people and followers to fight for their own rights otherwise "your place in this Hindu Society will be worse than a slave." The BSP has picked up this slogan in order to mobilise the people who they think need to be educated and there is also need for agitation for their just demands and above all every one should be united so that they can fight their enemy i.e. people of higher castes. They argue that the present condition of these depressed classes are not better and neither has it improved over the years. Only the form of exploitation has changed. There is still need for slogan like 'Educate, Agitate and Organise.'" Mr.K.Ram points out that the Bahujan Samaj has been awakened and the credit should be given to his party for this task. His party has been quite successful in this direction. He says that there are numerous awakening squads of BSP which are operational all over the country. The main job of BSP is to tell the people that "We poor people can no

9. Kanshi Ram, *The Chamcha Age : An era of the Stooges* (Delhi : 1982), p.117, Privated Printed.

longer remain in passive state giving in to the whims and fancies of the rich and upper caste. We no longer want to be ruled, we want to be the rulers in a society in which all have equal rights and self respect. We have to change this system where the poor have a life of degradation and insult and BSP is trying to deliver this message to the people."¹⁰

The BSP's main propoganda plank is the fight against what they call, a "Brahminical culture". By the Brahminical culture they mean the Hindu social order based on caste system. It, therefor, essentially promotes graded inequalities, social rigidity and occupational immobility and exploitation of the down trodden and the weaker sections in the name of religion. According to the caste system a man's position and value are determined by his birth in a particular caste and not by ^{his} worth. We cannot move either up or down as the vertical mobility is prohibited and he has to move only horizontally i.e. within his own caste. The caste system and Varna Vyavastha is also linked with rights and privelages to upper castes and denial of the same to the downtrodden. The upper castes enjoy all modern ways of life ignoring their castes based hereditary occupations. The Brahmins had right to priesthood and knowledge, the Kshatriya to fight and the Vyashyas indulge in business and serve the upper two castes, while the Shudras have none

10. Ashwini Sarin, "Lending a Voice to the Oppressed," *Indian Express* (Delhi), 29 March 1987.

of these rights. They are expected to serve to upper three 'Varnas', So that they are born in higher caste in the next birth through their 'Karmas' (actions). In addition to the Shudras there are ati-Shudra or Scheduled Caste or untouchables who are outside this four-fold caste system. This caste system is also a class system with the divine sanction.

The major character of this Brahminical religion is that even if a Brahmin is idiot and poor, he has to be considered as supreme being ^{and} God on earth and on other hand other castes however meritorious and worthy are inferior to a Brahmin because of his birth and not because of his worth. So they developed divine right theory and because of it our society remained static for 2000 years. At a certain stage in Hindu history the priestly class socially detached itself from the rest of the people and through closed door policy became a caste by itself. In this Brahminical religion, Dr. Ambedkar said 'Caste is an enclosed class'. The other castes also imitated the Brahmins who thereafter gave caste system a divine Sanction. So everyone believed in it and could not break it. Dr. Ambedkar asserted, "Endogamy or the closed door system, was a fashion in the Hindu society and as it originated from Brahmin caste, it was whole heartedly initiated by the Non- Brahmins, sub-divisions and classes became endogenous castes."¹¹ "Brahminism was

11. R. Sangeetha Rao, *SCEWASTAMB Handbook on Weaker Section as third force : The All India Federation of SC's/ST's, Backwards and Minorities Welfare Associations* (Delhi : 1987), p. 32.

defined by Dr. Ambedkar as the negation of the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity. In that sense, it is rampant in all classes and it is not confined to Brahminism alone though they have been originators. The effects of Brahminism were not confined to social rights such as inter dining and inter-marriage. It was also in civil rights. So omniscient is Brahminism that it even affects the fields of economic opportunity."¹² It points out that "the root of untouchability is the caste system, the root of caste system is religion attached to 'Varna and Ashram, the root of Varnasharam is Brahminical religion, and root of Brahminical religion is authoritarian or political power."¹³ It is pointed out that caste is not only class but it is more rigid than class and prohibits vertical mobility, while the class is flexible and allows vertical mobility ones social status changes according to the economic status. Though nowhere it is stated that one caste is superior or inferior to others but some of the class inequalities crept into the caste system. Brahminism belongs to both class with religions' sanction and source of power, which has to be demolished.

Even at present despite all the progress research studies reveal that caste cuts across the class divisions. These studies observe that the poor among the upper castes

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

do not identify their class interest with the poor of the lower castes. To support it, it is quoted that about 75% of the rich peasants and 90% of the Landlords employ labour. The landlords and rich peasants hail from advanced castes. Similarly 70% of the middle peasants in the developed areas and 60% in less developed village have come from advanced castes. As against this background the labour force comes from SC/ST and BCs. The kin-ship of the small peasants with higher class peasantry contributes to weaken the class consciousness among the small peasantry and landless labour. By and large the upper three castes constitute a class of rich while the rest as poor and this fact is well explained by what is known as caste-class correspondence. It is a fact that there may be some rich among the lower castes and there may be some poor among the higher castes but the poor among the advanced castes do not identify themselves with the poor of the lower castes. They think that they are superior to the lower castes and do not join or share any organisation against exploitation and suppression thereby making it difficult to organise the movement against oppression on caste line. Moreover, in the Indian context the dignity, self-respect and status is more a social factor than an economic one. Consequently, caste becomes an important category in any discussion and as a basis of an organisation. This makes it very clear that in India caste is a strong factor.

The BSP, in order to mobilise the people on Dalit ideology, tries to highlight the failures of all the previous Governments especially the Congress which is termed as highly Brahminical. It starts by criticising that our great leaders especially Dr. Ambedkar had made enough provisions in the Constitution for the benefit of the poor but it is unfortunate that these noble principles have not yet been realised. After so many years of Independence, we have not been able to secure adequate representation to all the communities in the organs of the state and eradicate hunger, starvation, exploitation, poverty, social discrimination, unemployment, rape, murder, communal riots etc. Largest number of atrocities are being committed on SCs\STs throughout the country. Karamchedu in Andhrapradesh, Arawal, Pipra and Belchi in Bihar, Kapatta, Dharampura and Vishrampur in U.P are but few instances as reported in the Parliament. During the four years from 1982 to 1986 about 15,500 innocent people were killed in Bihar. Many poor and down-trodden people were killed just for demanding minimum statutory wages or land which was distributed to them under land reforms.¹⁴ In the post Independence period, the country has progressed economically. Eight five year plans have been implemented but the benefits of these developments did not touch the

14. Ibid., p.39.

common man to the extent it was expected. Large chunk of the people are below the poverty line. Land reforms are not being implemented because of private ownership of agriculture and industry controlled by feudal lords and capitalists. Our economic system is based on private ownership of means of production supported and protected by public sector and the state.

The protection of civil rights act, 1955 is not being implemented properly as the Act needs the permission of the Govt. to prosecute the government servants who are the major offenders. There is a demand for making economic criterion as the basis for reservation. The intention for making economic criterion is to perpetuate the caste system and untouchability, Once social and educational backwardness is replaced. The claim of the weaker sections for representation in the organs of the state will be constitutionally finished. Before the demand of economic criterion was raised, there was a cry of inefficiency, which was demolished by the activities of advanced castes in the matter of admission to technical institutions on the payment of capitation fees. They have not discarded the issue of efficiency and have raised the bogey of the economic criterion. If this is the basis then how to challenge social and educational backwardness ? Why cannot the right to work be accepted as a fundamental right ? Why cannot the proportional representation be the policy of the Government?

Why 15% advance castes have monopolized the power and ruling over the 85% deprived population of this country ? If poverty is the basis for making reservation for Backward classes, have their economic conditions improved ?

In view of Mr. K.Ram our society stands vertically. If one compares it with the human body, the people above the neck are the beneficiaries of the present system. For these people the system is of added alleviation, it alleviates them in every way. These people are the creators of the caste system. Those below are the victims of the system. But all are not equal victims. It will be called a graded degradation. Those who are just below the neck are called intermediary castes like Jats and Reddys. So far the tussle used to be between the higher castes and the intermediary castes. The higher castes were sharing power with the intermediary castes by leaving some states to them and keeping the central government for themselves. So there is need to mobilise the society from the toe i.e. the most degraded. In this scheme of things, unity is the strength of the weaker sections, the need for change combined with the desire to call for a change amongst the needy along with unity is the formula that will help to attain a system that is " Horizontal so that all become equal." He points out that the final aim of the BSP is not to bring in dictatorship by downtrodden as the dictatorship of the Proletariat is necessary for communism. Neither would he agree with most of backward leaders that

reservation is the only way to eradicate inequality. He is against permanent reservation in jobs.

He says "I will never approve of a system in which people are made to walk on crutches."¹⁵ What we need is a socio-economic environment in which we can eat, talk, walk and compete on equal footing." Our aim is to create a BAHUJAN SAMAJ."¹⁶ For realization of such Samaj Social transformation is necessary and BSP has launched fivefold social transformation movement on 15 August 1988.¹⁷

They are as follows:

(1) Struggle for self respect : The Brahminical social order elevates the so called high castes and degrades so called lower castes. These degradations have resulted in the loss of human dignity and self-respect. During the last two centuries there had been lots of struggle for self respect all over India by people like Jyoti Rao Phule, E.R.Ramaswamy, Sahu Maharaj, Dr. Ambedkar etc. These struggle have improved the situation to a great extent but still there is need for continuing the struggle till human dignity and self respect are fully attained.

15. *Surya India* (New Delhi), April 1992, vol.16, no.5, English edn.

16. Ibid.

17. Ambeth Rajan, *New Hope for the Bahujan Samaj : S.C., S.T. OBC & Minorities* (Delhi : Privately Printed).

(II) Struggle for liberation : The Brahminical social system had denied human rights to the lower castes for centuries. The denial of the (a) Right to education, (b) Right to property (c) Right to acquire arms to defend themselves had resulted in social slavery. Thus those who have been denied these right had struggled for liberation all over India. Even today we see so many people launching liberation movements at different places and for different sections of the society, the BSP leadership still feel the need for struggle.

(III) Struggle for equality : The Brahminical social order stands vertical where all the castes are unequal. Brahminism represent perfect inequality. That is why Dr.B.R.Ambedkar advised the victims of the system "Let us uproot Brahminism, the spirit of inequality." There had been many movements in the past. We feel the need to continue the struggle till the unequal vertical social order is transformed to the Horizontal social order.

(IV) Struggle for Annihilation of Caste and building bridges of brotherhood in the broken society : Caste is the curse of India. It divides people and creates sense of high and low. Keeping in mind the evil effects of the caste system Dr.B.R.Ambedkar prepared a scheme for the annihilation of caste. Much has been done in the past but still more remains to be done. when the victims of the caste system speaks against its evil effects they are branded as casteist. We must keep on struggling against the caste

system irrespective of the charges levelled against us. We must keep on building bridges of brotherhood in a broken society.

(V) Struggle against Untouchability, injustice, atrocities and terror : The defective social order created troubles in the society in many ways. The past struggle against the above need to be continued more vigorously in future.

Further, the BSP, in order to show its commitment to Ambedkarite philosophy tries to highlight the difference of opinion between Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi on the question of abolition of untouchability and emancipation of the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar felt that Gandhi's championing of the Harijan cause was motivated by a desire to keep the Harijans in the Hindu fold while he himself was convinced that Harijans would never get a fair deal from the caste ridden Hindu society which was dominated by orthodox Brahminism who, in his opinion, could never agree to treat the low born Harijans at par. He felt that Gandhi did not give as much importance to the removal of untouchability as he did to the propagation of khadi and Hindu Muslim unity. "If he did, he would insist on the removal of untouchability as a precondition for entrance into Congress as he ^{has} insisted on thread spinning as a precondition for voting in Congress". But he concluded, "when no one else comes near to us, even

Gandhi's sympathy is of no little importance."¹⁸ In the year 1931 in London, where Gandhi denied the recognition of the depressed class as a minority and hence eligible for political safeguards made Dr. Ambedker bitterly critical.

After the third round conference, the general secretary of the Depressed classes institute S.N. Shivtarkar, wrote in Ambedker's paper, *Janata*, a criticism of Congress and Gandhi that reflects the feeling on Ambedkar side: In spite of the fact that the removal of untouchability has been included in the constructive programme of the Congress, practically nothing has been done so far by the body to achieve that object and in our fights against untouchability at Mahad and Nasik, most of the local Congress leaders have been our bitter opponents. Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to concede (at the Round Table Conference) on the behalf of the Congress special claims for the Mohammedans and Sikhs, including their demand for separate representation on 'historical grounds', but he was not ready to concede reserved seats in general electorates to the depressed classes, although he knew, at least he ought to have known, what sort of treatment they would get, should they be thrown at the mercies of the caste Hindus.

The greatest presumption on Gandhi's part at the Round Table Conference was that he claims that he represented the

18. C.B.Khairmode, *Dr. B.R.Ambedkar*, vol.II, pp. 117-18.

and not Dr. Ambedkar...

depressed classes, leadership cannot be imposed it must be accepted by those on whose behalf it is claimed, Congress is now dissecting the community of untouchables by playing one section of that community against the other.

Dr. Ambedkar's nomination to the Round Table Conference in 1930 to discuss India's future constitution was an acknowledgement of the leadership he had gained and the very fact of his participation extended his fame to every corner of Maharashtra and beyond. For Dr. Ambedkar, his and Dewan Bahadur R. Srinivasan's nomination meant "that the untouchables were regarded not merely as a separate element from the Hindu but also such importance as to have the right to be consulted in the framing of a Constitution for India."¹⁹ Subhash Chandra Bose voiced another interpretation of Ambedkar's political rise. "In 1930 and after, Dr. Ambedkar has had leadership thrust upon him by British Govt. because his services were necessary to embraSS the Nationalist leaders."²⁰ However, Ambedkar on his own terms identified himself with nationalism, if not with the nationalists. Before the first Round Table conference at a meeting of the All India Depressed class

19. B.R. Ambedkar, What Congress and Gandhi... as Quoted in Eleanor Zelliot ; Learning the use of Political Means : The Mahars of Maharashtra in Rajni Kothari, (ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.46.

20. S.C. Bose, The Indian Struggle, as Quoted in Eleanor Zelliot : The Learning the use of Political Means : The Mahars of Maharashtra in Rajni Kothari, (ed.) *Caste in Indian Politics* (Delhi : Oriented Longman, 1991), p.46.

conference held in Aug. 1930 at Nagpur, he said:

"I agree with the Congressmen that no country is good enough to rule over another. But I must also take the liberty to tell them at point blank that the proposition does not end there and that it is equally true that no class is good enough to rule over another class."²¹

In nutshell, the strength and influence of a political party cannot be fully appreciated without understanding the pattern of its inter-relationship with other political parties. In the case of BSP, its relationship with Congress deserves special mention because it reveals its relevance and origin as a reaction against Congress variant of Scheduled Caste Welfare Policies. For the present purpose (under the discussion of BSP ideology) it could well be said that the 'presence of Congress' could always be sensed in the BSP ideology and hence ^{here} ideology performs the function of showing how the BSP has got different and distinct approach and agenda from that of the Congress in the matters concerning scheduled castes (or to use an Umbrella and uncontestable terms as 'Depressed' section of the society)

According to Mr. Kanshi Ram, the BSP supremo, the Congress is the main Brahminical force. In his characteristic candid remark he said that "closure of one

21. Eleanor Zelliot, " Learning the use of Political Means : The Mahars of Maharashtra," in Rajni Kothari, (ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (Delhi : Orient Longman, 1991), p.46.

Desi liquor shop will be a minor achievement but closure of the Congress (I) shop a far bigger one.¹¹ There is a sound political logic behind this arsenal of criticism of Congress because unless they do not indulge in Congress or Gandhi (both inextricably interrelated) baiting they cannot establish themselves as sole and genuine representatives of Dalits and oppressed. They challenge the very basis and edifice of Congress approach towards the question of welfare of Dalits. They denounced Congress Concessions to Dalits as of the nature of alms and charity and hence their self respect is in question in such scheme of things and thus it is not acceptable to them. Also those Harijan leaders who are working for the welfare of their lot under the Congress banner has been dubbed, as to use Kanshi Ram celebrated phrase, "Chamacha of the Congress."²² Thus Congress as well as Gandhi's approach towards Harijans is strongly criticised and thus not acceptable to BSP. Here, Gandhian approach towards Harijan needs elaboration because Congress Dalit policies are basically handiwork of Gandhi. It is not an exaggeration to say Gandhi was the chief architect of the Congress Dalit policies as spirit of Gandhinism is quite evident in various measures taken by the Congress party for the welfare of the Dalits. The story will remain incomplete unless one does not reflect on the Congress perception and response to this party. The Congress under

 22. Kanshi Ram, *The Chamacha Age : An Era of The Stooges* (Delhi : 1982), Private Printed.

minded

Mrs. Gandhi had almost single approach towards opposition i.e of confrontation. The approach was slightly mellowed under Rajeev Gandhi but in general he too stuck to his mother's approach. However, his successor with razor thin majority cannot afford to follow the same line. So in general Congress treated them as any other opposition party.

For the BSP it is quite a suicidal to be just perceived as one of the building blocks of the opposition. Here too building and construction of a distinct identity from general oppositional politics is considered to be the crying need for the party. Consequently the arsenal of criticism is directed towards them also. Let us begin with the Communist Party.

Mr.K.Ram considers the Communist Party as a representative of Brahminical force and worse than others because of the existence of big hiatus between its thought and action, " They profess to work for change and yet work only for the status quo."²³ The accusation of status quo is labelled against almost all opposition parties in general. According to Mr.K.Ram under such arrangement there exist no scope for the upward mobility of the backward communities (it is to be noted here that R. Kothari too regards Indian opposition parties with barring exceptions of Communist parties as a product of the breaking up of the same

23. *The Telegraph* (Delhi), April 28, 1987.

Congress ideological block). On this point, the BSP finds itself totally on a separate and distinct ground as according to Mr.K. Ram his party stands for 'transformation' and social change as opposed to the Congress and the opposition parties vouchsafing and practising the politics of status quo.

As the education level of the party cadre and followers of the BSP is quite low, the party's leader in real politics becomes very important and assumes the role of a torch bearer. Here there is some purposiveness involved in this slightly explicit ideological account of BSP supremacy because in this kind of personality-based party the reflection in the form of various statements etc. of the top leader is of great importance. However, one should not infer from the above that BSP is just a personality-based party lacking a meaningful social issue. In fact, it is on the emotional appeal of these issues (the issues, concerns and problems to which this party addressed) that such personality thrives. In short, for the present purpose it is worthwhile to look at what Mr. Kanshi Ram has to say on various themes and issues in order to bring out the clear and holistic picture of the BSP ideology .

In this context nothing can be seen as more apt than to begin with on the very notion of ideology itself. According to Mr.K. Ram since the BSP is a new party and still at the stage of infancy, nothing can be said categorically and almost everything is of the contingent

nature. However, one can infer from this that the B.S.P's appreciation of an over all social and political situation as of 'flux nature' and ^{secondly} willingness of the party to respond to the new emerging problems and then reconstructing and reformulating new policies and new strategies accordingly. However, this argument of non-foundationism or non-fixidity of any ideas ~~could~~ be taken to far ^{and} as discussed in the preceding paragraph of the chapter it would be safely and logically derived that basic the me of the BSP ideology is Ambedkarism or anti-Brahminism. In fact, the BSP leaders emphasis more on bridging the status gap than establishing equality i.e. in other words they are more concerned with the social and cultural inequality and the economic inequality takes back seat in their scheme of things. In other words, they argue that social inequality is independent of economic inequality or is just one factor among many other factors. Apart from this they show firm faith in the Indian constitution, however, it is beyond the scope of this discussion, but nevertheless of immense interest while dealing with the paradox that how on one hand they are critical of Gandhi and on other hand they show firm faith in the Indian Constitution which has strong "Gandhian underpinings and overtones." Perhaps they resolve this vexed ideological issues with a readymade and a 'master key' kind of answer that, as the Constitution was very much the handiwork of Baba Saheb Ambedkar, in whose credibility they have firm faith, logically and

consequently the Constitution stands for their welfare and is repository of ideas favourable to the solution of their problems. However, a kind of uneasiness is quite noticeable to any serious scholar working on this theme of the Indian politics.

In the similar line of argument it is quite imperative to enumerate the BSP's stand on issue like socialism, Indian peasantry, question of power and self-respect, inclusion of OBC and Muslims in its bandwagon. Only such enumeration can dispel the doubts and accusations of the BSP being a party with a myopic ideology.

According to K. Ram socialism cannot achieve its cherished goal so long as Brahminism exists and dominates the social life because it will always behave as a fetter in establishing equality.

Mr. Kanshi Ram considers the OBCs and Muslims and other minorities groups as victims of a Brahminical caste order and thinks for uniting them and building a joint force in order to charge and challenge the existing hegemonic position of the Brahmins and other forward castes. He favours the implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations and firmly believes that intermediate castes which constitutes 52 per cent of the overall population got even less than what SCs, STs has got in terms of benefits, facilities and opportunities. It is to be noted here that endorsement of the Mandal Commission recommendations is the logical corollary of the party

philosophy that unless power to determine what is good and bad comes in the hand of people who are going to be benefited, no actual benefit will accrue to them. Even if they get the benefits in real material sense they have to pay a heavy price of self-respect because such benefits would be in the form of alms or charity. In order to bring out politics from all these endorsement and helping attitude towards OBCs for the present ^{purpose}, it is to be noted that it is of no importance that whether or not the BSP Supremo sympathises genuinely for other oppressed classes or not but in order to broad base the movement and break the edifice of Brahminical superiority it is a quite well thought and in terms of political payoffs quite an effective strategy. According to Mr. Kanshi Ram it was for centuries that just 15 per cent of forward castes controlled and subjugated the rest 85 per cent of population. And if one analyses this one can well notice the rationale of bringing all other depressed section under one banner. In fact, the conscious realization of the fact that broadening of base will increase its bargaining power and only then it can bring some fundamental and radical change in society.

On the question of peasant movement Mr. Kanshi Ram says that all the existing farmers movements sponsored by the Congress and the opposition parties talk of an increase in the price of the agricultural produce but none about agricultural workers in relation to the increase in the cost of their produce. According to him the increase in the

price, that these farmers agitations are demanding, is sought to be pocketed by a big landlords, which he opposes. He categorises the farmers into 5 categories.

- 1) Landless farmers (34%)
- 2) Marginal farmers (26%)
- 3) Peasant proprietors(22%)
- 4) Feudal lords
- 5) Neo-feudal lords (18%)

According to Kanshi Ram people who constitute nearly 50 per cent of the total agricultural population in the country fall under the first three categories and say that the BSP stand for them only.

On the question of how the BSP could challenge parties like the Congress which have power of musclemen and moneybag, Kanshi Ram says that "our strength is not in jeeps and computers but lies in men and bullock carts." According to him since he raises the genuine issues of 85% of people so he can mobilize them. Thus to him mass support is the basis of his power. Also he subscribed to the view of Baba Saheb Ambedkar, according to whom, power is a capacity to bring about the desired improvement in the condition of the poverty stricken people. The BSP also subscribed to Ambedkar's contention that the Dalit would get "power" by organising themselves into a third party and holding the balance of power between the rival parties.

As argued earlier that the party's basic emphasis is on bridging the status inequality ^{thus its stand} on the question of self-respect needs to be elaborated here. The party stands for "Samta and Samman" (equality and self-respect) but it is to be noted here that the party considers bridging status to be more important than establishing equality. To quote Mr. Kanshi Ram " Brahminical social order stand vertical," where all the castes are unequal. Brahminism represents perfect inequality and that is why Dr. Ambedkar advised the victim of the system," Let us uproot Brahminism the spirit of inequality" . We feel the need to continue the struggle till the unequal vertical social order is transfer to the horizontal social order where all are equals." At another place Mr.Kanshi Ram said "please remember, our primary objective is not power at any cost we want to achieve dignity as well."

On the basis of this chapter it can be said with conviction that the BSP has deep faith in the philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar. But the BSP is willing to interpret this philosophy in today's socio-economic condition and configuration. Dr. Ambedkar again becomes important for the BSP ideology when question of its commitment to the country's constitution comes in. The party shows faith in the constitution which has strong influence of Gandhian philosophy, sometimes unacceptable to the party. Here Dr. Ambedkar who was the chief architect of this constitution

rescues the BSP from being trapped in this contradiction and dictomony.

CHAPTER - III
SOCIAL BASE AND LEADERSHIP

Functioning of an effective political party depends on several factors like the social content of its programme, its election performance, the network of various alliances and linkages which it forges at the time of election, its social base and recruitment policy, its formal and informal organizational structure, and the social background of its members. In a developing society like India, the forces of tradition and modernisation both are at work, hence, the role of the political leaders become still more difficult. They have to articulate, and balance the diverse and confused demands of several competing groups in society. Recent theorists suggest that the changing social characteristics of political leaders serve as an index of the changing distribution of power within a society. This view has been most clearly expressed by Harold Lasswell and is the theoretical basis of the 'elite' analysis of the Hoover Institute. These studies may give us new insights into the nature of political change.

Only by considering biographical factors an adequate explanation of the behavior of political leaders can be obtained. As David B. Truman, posits : "The politician legislator is not equivalent to the steel ball in a pinball game, bumping passively from post to post down an inclined

plane."¹ He is a human being involved in a variety of relationship with others in society. In this role as legislator his accessibility to various groups is affected by the whole series of relationships.

Equally important is the fact that a politicians values and personal convictions are heavily influenced by his environment, early life experiences. Group membership and identifications are therefore, essential to the full understanding of his behavior in public office. Social characteristics of political leaders can also be used to ascertain their position in a society, within the system of social stratification. A number of recent theorists have suggested that political leaders tend to be chosen from near the top of a society's prestige hierarchy. If this is true, a society class or caste system may have as much to do with the nature of a nations political leaders as electoral system, political parties, and other formal devices for the choice of leaders. Legislators are usually treated as a special class of persons set apart from others. Despite their official distinction however, legislators remains members of the society, subject to all the laws and principles they apply in the society. It seems obvious therefore, that much of the legislators behavior will be guided by his own qualities and social characteristics. In

1. David B. Truman, *The Government Process*, as Quoted in *State Legislature in India* by Dayadhar Jha (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977), p.32.

many instances there are qualities or characteristics that he possesses before becoming a legislator which shape his actions in all his social role. In others, they are qualities and characteristics that are acquired as a result of his own particular legislative experience. In any case, analysis of legislative behavior must reckon with behavioral characteristics which vary from, to legislator, according to their individual and social background and psychological makeup.

Various background characteristics like occupation, age, caste, education, religion, special interest, and similar characteristics of members of various legislatures testify to the intensity with which it has been assumed that the legislator's behaviour is influenced by their social background. The assumption behind all such descriptive accounts is that it makes a difference in the function of a legislator, whether there are in it more farmers than workers, more old than young persons, more men than women, more lawyers than businessmen and so on.

However, it is impossible to say what difference it makes unless one has some notion of how different personal background affect the persons concerned. An apparently common assumption is that social class conditions person with determinate ideological biases so that legislators will carry with them the conceptions of the goals and means which they acquire from their social origins.

However, it would be dangerous to accept a simple class theory equating social origins with legislative performance. The actual effect of social class varies from one culture to another. What constitutes a class in one place may not do so in another. Are Indian farmers, for example, a class distinct from businessmen and workers, or are farmers and businessmen together members of a class distinct from workers? Which is more important in shaping a person's behaviour. The fact that he belongs to the middle-class or the fact that he is a farmer? In many cases then, it is desirable to consider the problem not in terms of class but in terms of interest.

An attempt is made to study the social base of Bahujan Samaj Party leaders who were elected to Lok Sabha and assemblies of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. This is important and in order to probe into the dynamics of interaction between the society and the polity. The nature of legislative elite may indicate the type of policies that are likely to be pursued and formulated and shift from one type of legislative elite to another may help forecast whether the changes would accelerate or retard the process of socio-economic change and the way it would affect the distribution of power and resources.

An attempt has been made to find answers to questions like : From which socio-economic strata of the society do these leaders come? Are they proportionately drawn from various segments of the society and form a group, regardless

of economic and social factors or is there any socio-economic bias in their recruitment ? In other words, do they constitute a homogeneous socio-economic group ? And is there any significant socio-economic similarity and relationship between them and the social stratum which they represent ?

Answers to these questions are significant on many accounts. As mentioned above empirical descriptions of social base of the leaders are important for describing the working interaction between social structure, and political institutions. It also helps in understanding their political attitudes and role performance. In a society like India, the study of socio-economic background of the political leaders is of great importance, since caste, religion, regionalism and language play an important role in politics.

BSP Leadership

A look at the profile of the BSP legislators in Uttar Pradesh Assembly since 1989 and Tenth Lok Sabha will give an idea about their social background.

Table 1.1 (A&B) gives an idea about the age profile of the BSP members in U.P. Legislative Assembly who were elected in 1989 and 1991 and Members of Parliament elected in the year 1991 to Tenth Lok Sabha.

Table 1.1(A) -

AGE PROFILE OF THE BSP LEGISLATORS IN U.P.
1989 & 1991

AGE	1989	1991
21-30	-	-
31-40	6	10
41-50	4	-
51-60	2	-
N.M.	1	2
TOTAL	13	12

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991* (Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 1.1 (A) Shows thatⁱⁿ 1989 there were 6 members in the age group 31-40 out of total 13 members followed by 4 members in the age group 41-50 and then there were only 2 members in the age group 51-60. However age of one member was not available in the same table. Of the members elected in year 1991, there were 10 members in the age group of 31-40 out of 12 whereas age of two legislator were not available.

Table 1.1 (B) -: AGE PROFILE OF THE B.S.P MEMBERS IN
TENTH LOK SABHA

AGE	1991
21-30	-
31-40	2
41-50	-
51-60	1
TOTAL	3

Source : Parliament of India:10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who* (New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 1.1 (B) shows that in the tenth Lok sabha, of those who were elected on the BSP tickets, there are 2 members out of 3 in the age group of 31-40 and one in the age group of 51-60.

Table 1.2 (A)

EDUCATION PROFILE OF U.P. BSP LEGISLATORS1989 & 1991

CATEGORIES	1989	1991
ILLITRATE	-	-
MATRIC	3	1
INTERMEDIATE	1	4
GRADUATE	4	3
P.GRADUATE	3	2
LAW	-	-
N.M.	2	2
TOTAL	13	12

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991*
(Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 1.2 (B)

EDUCATION PROFILE OF BSP M.P's. ELECTED FORTENTH LOK SABHA.

Categories	1991
Illiterate	-
Matric	-
Intermediate	1
Graduate	1
Post Graduate	-
Law	-
Gyani	1
Total	3

Source : Parliament of India:10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who* (New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 1.2 (A) & (B) delineates the educational background of BSP leaders who were elected in 1989 and 1991 U.P. election and Tenth Lok Sabha. There was not a single leader who was not literate. One can find that in 1989 there were 3 matriculate and one member with Basic Training Course (BTC) which shows that he was trained teacher, but in the next election that is in 1991 there was only one leader who was a matriculate. There was one leader with intermediate qualification whereas in 1991 there were 4 members and also there is one member with intermediate in the present Lok Sabha. ^{In 1989} there were four graduates and three postgraduates, out of total 13 members, all the postgraduates

were either law graduate or had training in Teaching etc. The educational background of two members were not available. In the 1991 elections there were three graduates, and two postgraduates. Out of three graduates, one was a science graduate along with law degree and the other was holding a degrees in law. Both the post graduates were also holding degree in law and one also had done training in teaching. Again the educational background of two members were not available.

The three members who are elected to tenth Lok Sabha one member is intermediate the other one is science graduate and the third one is a Gyani that ^{is} he possesses religious degree.

An analysis of age shows that most of the legislators were in the age group of 31-40 that is young legislators in 1989 and 1991 U.P. legislative Assembly and also in the Lok sabha. This indicates that the BSP is dominated by young leaders whereas Mr. Kanshi Ram who is the national president of the BSP falls in the age group of 51-60.

Table 1.3

Caste profile of The BSP M.Ps

Caste	1991
SC	1
BC	2
Muslim	-
Total	3

Source : Parliament of India: 10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who* (New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 1.4

CASTE PROFILE OF THE BSP LEGISLATORS
IN U.P. ASSEMBLY

CASTE	1989	1991
S.C	5	1
B.C	3	10
MUSLIM	5	1
TOTAL	13	12

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991* (Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 1.5

CASTE PROFILE OF THE BSP LEGISLATORS
IN PUNJAB ASSEMBLY

CASTE	1992
S.C	9
B.C	-
MUSLIM	-
TOTAL	9

Table 1.6

CASTE PROFILE OF THE BSP LEGISLATORS
IN MADHYA PRADESH ASSEMBLY

CASTE	1990
S.C	2
B.C	-
MUSLIM	-
TOTAL	2

TABLE 1.7

CASTE PROFILE OF THE BSP LEGISLATORS
IN HARYANA ASSEMBLY

CASTE	1991
B.C	1
S.C	-
MUSLIM	-
TOTAL	1

Table 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 delineates the caste background of the legislators who were elected to tenth Lok Sabha, and legislative assemblies of U.P., Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana.

The table shows that in U.P. 1989 elections out of 13 members five were Scheduled Castes, five Muslims and three from Backward Castes, whereas in 1991 out of 12 members 10 were from B.C whereas one from S.C and one from Muslim. This shows that ^{in 1989} all the three groups equally managed to capture the legislative seats whereas in 1991 BSP was dominated by leaders from B.C.

But the situation is totally different in the case of Punjab Legislative Assembly in which all the seats were won by S.C. candidates in the reserved constituency as well as general constituency. Out of nine seats won by the BSP all

the nine seats were won by legislators, from S.C groups only. The same is also visible in the case of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, where two seats won by the BSP went to the S.C. But in Haryana where BSP won one seat which went to B.C. In the case of Lok Sabha out of three seats won by the BSP one was won by S.C. candidate from a general constituency, i.e. Mr. Kanshi Ram himself from Etawah in U.P.

An analysis of the caste background shows that BSP is dominated by S.C legislators followed by BC's and then Muslims. Table indicates that there were 40 representatives out of which 18 fall in S.C., 16^{1b} B.C and six in Muslim category.

Table 1.8

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE OF U.P. B.S.P LEGISLATORS

1989 - 1991		
OCCUPATION	1989	1991
AGRICULTURE	8	5
GOVT. SERVICE	-	-
POLITICS	-	-
SOCIAL SERVICE	-	-
ADVOCATE	1	4
DOCTOR	-	-
TEACHER	2	1
BUSINESS	-	-
N.M.	2	2
TOTAL	13	12

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991* (Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 1.9

OCCUPATION PROFILE OF BSP M.Ps
OF TENTH LOK SABHA.

OCCUPATION	1991
AGRICULTURE	1
POLITICS	1
TEACHER	1
TOTAL	3

Source : Parliament of India:10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who* (New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 1.8 and 1.9 shows that in 1989 & 1991, members from the agriculture community dominated. There were eight members out of 13 in 1989 with agriculture as occupation and in 1991 there were five out of 12 members from agriculture. There were some who had two occupations, for example, along with agriculture they had business. There were two more who practiced law and medicine apart from their agricultural work. There were four advocates in 1991 and ^{one} in 1989 followed by two teachers in 1989 and one in 1991. The occupation of two members was not available. In the case of Lok Sabha, out of three member one is from agriculture, the other one is from Politics and the third one from teaching profession.

Table 2.0

B.S.P. PERFORMANCE IN DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES
(UTTAR PRADESH)

CONSTITUENCY	1989	1991
RESERVED	5	1
GENERAL	8	11
TOTAL	13	12

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991*
(Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

TABLE 2.1

B.S.P. PERFORMANCE IN DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES-
(PUNJAB, MADHYA PRADESH, HARYANA)

CONSTITUENCY	PUNJAB	M.P.	HARYANA
	1992	1990	1991
RESERVED	6	1	—
GENERAL	3	1	1
TOTAL	9	2	1

Table 2.0 & 2.1 shows that BSP won more seats from general constituency. In U.P. Assembly elections in 1989

out of 13 seats won, BSP managed to get eight seats in general and five seats in reserve constituency whereas in 1991 out of 12 seats which it won eleven from general constituency and one from reserved. In the case of Punjab it won 9 seats which included reserved as well as general seats. They won six from reserved and three from general constituency. More importantly, even the general seats were contested by SC candidates and won successfully. In M.P. Assembly election, B.S.P won two seats, one each from reserved and general constituency. In Haryana it won one seat in general constituency. As far as Lok Sabha is concerned, all the three seats won by BSP are from general seats that too one seat was won by a S.C candidate, the seat of Mr. K.Ram the national President of BSP.

Table 2.2

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE B.S.P. LEGISLATORS IN
UTTAR PRADESH

NAME OF ORGANISATION	1989	1991
1. CASTE, COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	-	2
2. EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	4	1
3. SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION	4	5
4. LABOUR ORGANISATION	2	1
5. FARMERS ORGANISATION	1	-
6. YOUTH ORGANISATION	-	2
7. COOPERATIVE	-	-
8. N.M.	6	4

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991* (Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 2.3

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP OF B.S.P. M.P's
IN TENTH LOK SABHA

NAME OF ORG.	1991
(1) CASTE & COMMUNITY ORG.	-
(2) EDUCATIONAL INST.	-
(3) SOCIAL WELFARE ORG.	-
(4) LABOUR ORG.	-
(5) FARMERS ORG.	-
(6) YOUTH CLUBS	-
(7) COOPERATIVES ORG.	-
(8) TRADERS ORG.	-
(9) PARTY ORG.	3

Source : Parliament of India:10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who* (New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 2.2 & 2.3 shows the institutional membership of BSP legislators of 1989 & 1991 in U.P. Legislative Assembly

and Tenth Lok Sabha. One can see that there were none in 1989 who had any kind of membership with caste or community organisation but in 1991 there were two who had membership of such organisation. In 1989, there were four who had membership of educational institutions varying from simple membership to Chairmanship, in 1991 it declined to only one person who was holding some kind of membership. Most of the persons were affiliated to some kind of social welfare organisation. The data shows that there were four in 1989 and five in 1991. There were two representatives affiliated to Labour organisations in 1989 and one in 1991. From the data an interesting and paradoxical observation about the BSP legislator's can be made, despite the fact that the party draws leadership from the agriculture community ^{but} when it comes to affiliation to farmers organisation only one such legislator was found. In the case of youth organizations there were only two people who had its membership despite the fact that BSP has maximum number of youth leaders i.e., between the age group of 31-40. The institutional membership of six members in 1989 and four in 1991 is not available. On the question of members of Tenth Lok Sabha all the three members are related to party organisation. One is the national president and other two are presidents of BSPs state units.

Table 2.4

SPECIAL INTERESTS OF THE B.S.P LEGISLATORS
(UTTAR PRADESH)

SPECIAL INTERESTS	1989	1991
POLITICS	3	3
TEACHING	1	1
SPORTS	2	4
SOCIAL WORK	10	7
MUSIC	-	1
READING BOOKS	2	3
TRAVELLING	-	1
LEGAL ADVICE	-	1
N.M.	1	1

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Who's is Who 1989 and 1991*
(Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 2.5

SPECIAL INTERESTS OF THE B.S.P. M.P. (TENTH LOKSABHA)	
SPECIAL INTERESTS	1991
SERVICE	2
GAMES	1

Source : Parliament of India: 10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who* (New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 2.4 and 2.5 delineates the special interests of the members elected in 1989 & 1991^{U.P} Assembly elections and to tenth Lok Sabha. The table shows that there were maximum number of legislators who had special interests in social work. There were 10 in 1989 and seven in 1991 who were interested in social work. There were three each in 1989 & 1991 whose interests were politics, there were two in 1989 and three in 1991 who were interested in reading books, there were two in 1989 and four in 1991 who had special interests in sports. There were one each in 1989 and 1991 interested in teaching and there were one each in travelling and legal advice in 1991. As far as M.P's are concerned two out of three have special interests in social work and the last one in sports.

Table 2.6

RELIGIOUS PROFILE OF THE B.S.P LEGISLATORS
(UTTAR PRADESH)

Religion	1989	1991
Hindu	8	11
Muslim	5	1
Sikh	-	-
Christian	-	-
Others	-	-
Total	13	12

Source: U.P. Vidhan Sabha, *Whos is Who 1989 and 1991*
(Lucknow : Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya).

Table 2.7

RELIGIOUS PROFILE OF THE B.S.P- MPS. (TENTH LOK SABHA)

Religion	1991
Hindu	2
Muslim	-
Sikh	1
Others	-
Total	3

Source : Parliament of India:10th Lok Sabha, *Who's is Who.*
(New Delhi : Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992).

Table 2.6 and 2.7 show that 1989 and 1991 UP assembly results were dominated by Hindus. In 1989, out of 13 B.S.P legislators eight were Hindus and rest were Muslims. In 1991 out of 12 BSP legislators there were 11 Hindus and one Muslim. Same pattern can be seen in the case of Lok Sabha also where out of three BSP MPs two are Hindus and one is Sikh.

By carefully reading and analysing the tables about the social background of the BSP leadership, it can be safely said that rural based educated people are leading this party. But the party has its leaders from as varied fields from law, medicine and salaried class. The party leadership is not only coming from Hindu section of the society but also from Muslims and Sikhs.

It would be wrong to say that party's true leadership comes from elite class because most of them come from modest socio-economic background. Nevertheless, this leadership is placed on a better socio economic plank as compared to the section the party represents. One unique thing about this party is that the party organisation is dominated and managed by a younger age-group unlike other national parties. Not only this but its leadership has some training in public life because of their association with farmer and labour organisations, some of them even worked as social worker and held offices in municipal and district level bodies.

CHAPTER - IV
ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE

Introduction of universal adult franchise for the state and central legislatures brought the political parties into an intimate and direct relationship with Indian society, whose principal features are relatively low level of social integration and essentially agglomerative character. Caste and community were never out of Indian public life and even the great reform movements of the 19th century did not transcend them. Formally organized political parties oriented towards communal interests have existed since at least 1906 when the All India Muslim League and the All-India Hindu Mahasabha were founded. They were followed by the Justice Party, a movement dominated by the non-Brahmin landowners of Andhra Pradesh, founded in Coimbatore in 1917, and the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation founded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in 1942 .

The parties based on organized economic interest were a few, and the only significant one was the Unionist Party in the Punjab founded by Fazl-al-Hussain in 1923 representing the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh landlords in the province. The nationalist movement itself was not subjected to those group interests seeking accommodation normally exerted upon political parties in a democratic society. The plural social structure in India was not allowed to find uninhibited expression in its politics when all efforts were directed towards winning Independence. But an important

consequence of the penetration of politics into society which accompanied the growth of national movement was to spread political awareness among increasing sections of a very poorly integrated population and to promote ideas of social solidarity among them. Since the integrative process was far slower than the political awakening it resulted in emphasizing group identities often at the expense of the larger national community. The Constitutional framework introduced in 1950 was designed to promote national integration through electoral process which when set to work in 1952 accelerated the politicization of the population. But, the vast majority of the new electorate was politically illiterate; its social awareness often did not extend beyond caste and community considerations and by and large it was innocent of issue transcending those of strictly personal interest. Once these persons were brought into the political process, the parties had to take into account in selecting their candidates on the parochial sentiments and loyalties, which alone seemed to have significance for the majority of the electorate. Lacking generally direct contact with the voters through their own organizational agencies, parties had to approach them through intermediaries having access to them in terms of mostly informal traditional organizations. Their formal appeal to the electorate continued to be couched in what Morris - Jones has called the 'modern idioms', but the candidates knew well that the party manifestos exercised little

influence on the ultimate choice of the voters. The interpenetration of politics and the social order compelled the parties to come to terms with and in the process help to moderate and modify the traditional organisation in Indian public life. Even when the struggle for power and influence appeared to encourage them to make use of group sentiment, thus increasing and solidifying the already powerful parochial tendencies, the parties in effect contributed to the making of the national community by drawing many non modern groups into the modern section of political activity.

Since Independence the new factor for competition for the distribution of public resources has been added to the contention for power and influence. The parties have tried to utilize social groups for strengthening their own electoral base, while the latter have tried to utilize parties for gaining a share in the resources being made available by the state agencies for economic development and social welfare. In competition for their support the ruling party possessed a great advantage over its adversaries by virtue of its command over public resource and it has utilized these to build for itself a firm support base. The opposition parties have tried to secure support by appealing to sectional sentiments whether over language or over economic claim and by taking up group causes, though only occasionally with success. However, every party has become engaged in the dual and seemingly

contradictory process of encouraging sectionalism and integrating the community.

It is a necessary feature of parliamentary democracy that the power struggle takes place through periodical free elections in a newly established democratic system the contending parties tend to become increasingly oriented towards organizing themselves for mobilizing electorate support of their candidates. Their capacity to influence decisions when they do not command power, depends upon the number of seats they win and the proportion of votes they poll and the need to secure the largest numbers of votes possible, imposes on them the effort to cultivate the support of diverse elements in the community. Their emphasis shifts from a select membership to a mass following and every democratic party becomes a coalition of groups commanding some support among different sections of the electorate. This weakens discipline within the party and the attempt to formulate its objectives so as to arouse least opposition makes it ideologically heterogeneous. Its consensus rests on the minimal agreement indispensable for either maintaining the party in existence or placing it or keeping it in power.

The regional, religion, ethnic, linguistic, social and cultural diversity in India have given rise to a multiplicity of political parties. In 1952, the Election Commission recognized 14 all India and 52 states parties for the allocation of symbols. The total number of parties

seeking recognition from the Commission reached 178 excluding the 14 all India parties, while the number of parties which secured some votes in the election were 70.¹ In 1957, on the criterion of having secured at least three percent of the valid votes polled in the preceding election the Commission recognised four national and 12 state parties and in addition there were 36 other parties who contested the second general election in different states.² For the third general election in 1962, on the same criterion as applied in 1957 the Commission recognized nine all India parties and seven state parties and in addition listed in the report 18 other parties as having secured some votes either in Lok Sabha or the State Assembly constituencies or both.³ For the ninth General election to the Lok Sabha which was held in 1989 there were eight national parties i.e. / ^{Indian} National Congress, Janata Dal, Bhartiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party Marxist, Indian Congress (Socialist-Sarat chandra Sinha), Janata Party (JP) and Lok Dal Bahuguna and 20 states parties i.e. Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Shiromani

1. Election Commission, India, *Report on The First Election in India 1951-52*, vol.1, (General), p.189.

2. *Report on the Second General Election in India 1957*, vol.1, (General), pp.83-87

3. *Report on The Third General Election in India, 1962*, vol.2, (Statistical), pp.12-13 & 89-85 .

Akali Dal in Punjab, Dravida munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu etc., and registered parties like Bahujan Samaj party and Vijaya Shakti.⁴

After the ten General Elections political opinion has crystallized around national and local parties representing nationalist, socialist, secular, communal, tribal, caste and regional-linguistic tendencies. The national parties in the sense of those having a wide territorial coverage, are the INC, Janata Dal, BJP, Communist party of India etc. The local parties, commanding a following in only one or a few of the states are BSP in U.P. and Punjab, Akali Dal in Punjab, Republican Party in Maharashtra, DMK and AIDMK in Tamil Nadu, Telgu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand in Bihar etc.

The significant feature of the Indian party system is not that there are so many parties but that there are so few which are really important and that nearly all of them formulate their policies and programmes in terms of national issues. For short term political purposes all parties espouse sectional or regional cause but national issues dominate their deliberation and actions.

The Bahujan Samaj Party is a registered party in 15 states and three Union Territories and it has contested general elections in 1989 and 1991. In this chapter, its

4. Report on Ninth General Election In India 1989, vol.2 (Statistical).

electoral performance is analysed on the basis of 1989 election results only since 1991 election results are not available. This will also include its performance in Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections held in 1989 and Punjab Assembly election held in 1992.

The BSP fielded a total of 246 candidates for the general elections to the House of the people which was held in 1989 and won three seats, two from Uttar Pradesh and one from Punjab and polled 6,215,093⁷ valid votes with 2.07 per cent of votes. Uttar Pradesh and Punjab are the two strongholds of BSP. It managed to poll 9.93% in Uttar Pradesh and 8.62% in Punjab. These ^{are} the two states where it has managed to get some Assembly seats. Along with U.P and Punjab it also won seats in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana Assembly elections.

Table 1.1

B.S.P. Performance : General election to Lok Sabha 1989

	No. of seats contested	Elected	Total Valid Votes Polled	% of votes
All India	246	3	6,215,0937	2.07
1.U.P	75	2	38,75,417	9.93
2.Punjab	12	1	6,84,763	8.62
3.M.P	35	-	8,42,972	4.28
4.J & K	1	-	42,453	4.06
5.Delhi	5	-	1,11,269	3.65
6.Haryana	9	-	99,164	1.62
7.Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	-	708	1.36
8.Chandigarh	1	-	2,905	1.34
9.Goa	2	-	5,372	1.29
10.Himachal Pradesh	4	-	15,870	0.84
11.Maharashtra	30	-	1,81,516	0.67
12.Andhra Pradesh	20	-	1,38,257	0.49
13.W.B	20	-	98,349	0.31
14.Rajasthan	10	-	43,119	0.30
15.Orissa	4	-	15,388	0.14
16.Kerala	8	-	17,762	0.12
17.Bihar	7	-	31,931	0.11
18.Gujrat	2	-	7,878	0.06

Table 1.1 shows the party's electoral performance in terms of number of seats contested in each state with number of seats captured with total valid votes polled and its percentage of votes .

Table 1.2

**BSP Performance : General Election to Lok Sabha from
Uttar Pradesh - 1989**

S.No.	Constituency	% of Votes Polled	Position of BSP
1.	Agra	4.6	3rd
2.	Akbarpur	24.5	3rd
3.	Aligarh	7.8	3rd
4.	Allahabad	19.0	3rd
5.	Amethi	6.3	3rd
6.	Amroha	16.0	3rd
7.	Azamgarh	31.9	Ist
8.	Ballia	9.8	3rd
9.	Banda	20.0	2nd
10.	Bansgaon	18.1	3rd
11.	Barabanki	17.5	3rd
12.	Basti	14.9	3rd
13.	Bijnor	38.0	Ist
14.	Bilnaur	4.7	3rd
15.	Bulandshar	7.2	3rd
16.	Chail	13.3	3rd
17.	Chandauli	15.3	3rd
18.	Deoria	14.9	3rd
19.	Domariaganj	4.9	3rd
20.	Faizabad	8.3	3rd
21.	Fatehpur	7.9	3rd
22.	Firozabad	2.9	3rd
23.	Ghatampur	5.8	3rd
24.	Ghosi	26.1	3rd
25.	Hamirpur	14.4	3rd
26.	Hardwar	22.6	3rd
27.	Mathura	11.6	3rd
28.	Jalaun	28.4	2nd
29.	Jhansi	6.2	3rd
30.	Khirana	2.5	3rd
31.	Kaiser Ganj	25.3	3rd
32.	Khalilabad	26.2	2nd
33.	Khurja	4.2	3rd
34.	Lalganj	28.2	3rd
35.	Machhali Shahr	10.2	3rd
36.	Mainpuri	5.1	3rd
37.	Mirzapur	13.8	3rd
38.	Misrikh	17.2	3rd
39.	Mohandlal Ganj	8.8	3rd
40.	Nainital	6.4	3rd
41.	Phulpur	23.2	3rd
42.	Partap Garh	7.5	3rd
43.	Rampur	25.7	3rd
44.	Roberts Ganj	11.5	3rd
45.	Saharanpur	4.9	3rd
46.	Saidpur	18.4	3rd

47.	Salempur	12.1	3rd
48.	Sambhal	8.2	3rd
49.	Shahabad	5.5	3rd
50.	Sitapur	26.0	3rd
51.	Sultanpur	11.2	3rd
52.	Varanasi	7.6	3rd

Note : Only those constituencies are taken into account where BSP has stood Ist, IInd or IIIrd.

BSP's Electoral performance in Uttar Pradesh

Table 1.2 shows those constituencies in Uttar Pradesh where BSP's candidates stood either Ist, 2nd or at 3rd position and the percentage of votes obtained by its candidates in those constituencies. The BSP which contested 75 seats out of 85 seats in which its candidates won 2 seats, Azamgarh with 31.9% of votes and Bijnor seat with 38.0% of votes and stood at IInd position in at least three constituencies Banda (20%) Jalaun (28.4%) and Khalilabad (26.2%) and at 47 constituencies they stood at 3rd position.

The BSP has got as low as 2.5 per cent of votes and still managed to stand at 3rd position and maximum per cent of votes it got was in Bijnor (38%) where its candidate Ms Mayawati won the seat defeating the nearest rival from Janata Dal. In this election Congress party was pushed to 2nd position in at least 22 Constituencies because of the presence of the BSP candidates. The Congress which won 15 Lok Sabha seats from U.P was at poor 2nd position whereas the Janata Dal was on Ist position with 54 seats so it was a big setback for congress in U.P elections. As far as

BSP's performance in Uttar Pradesh Lok Sabha election in terms of percentage of votes polled in its favour is concerned it has done better than many of the political parties. The Bharatiya Janata Party did worse than the BSP. The BJP polled merely 7.6% of votes and its candidates in the contest were also less than BSP i.e. 31. But, as far as number of successful candidates are concerned it did better than BSP. Likewise the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India Marxist (CPM) has also polled less percentage of votes than BSP. The CPI polled 1.4% and the CPM polled 0.4% of votes. The BSP's electorate performance in Uttar Pradesh has been quite good in terms of the mobilization of the people in its favour that is, those people who till that period were votebanks of parties like Congress. It is evident from the data that the BSP polled almost the same percentage of votes as Congress did in some of the constituencies. Since the critical factor in achieving electoral success may well be the extent of its party organisation—the extent of its penetration and the availability of a wide spread patronage net work and it is quite a new party its organisation is not as good as other parties, it lacks deeper penetration into the constituencies. Because of its direct appeal to the electorate it managed to build for itself pockets of support on the basis of caste and benefited mainly from the negative, anti-Congress votes. A measure of a party's stable support is the capacity of the party to retain seats

from one election to the next election. This has been done in the table 1.3 showing how much seats the BSP managed to retain from 1989 U.P. assembly to 1991 election. The BSP won 13 Assembly seats in 1989 in U.P. assembly elections and 12 seats in 1991 election. In the district of Azamgarh where BSP got two seats in 1989 election, it got three in 1991. In Banda district where BSP got no seats in 1989 it raised to three seats in 1991 election. Like wise in Districts of Mirzapur, Jaunpur and Hamirpur where the BSP had no seat at all, it captured one seat from each from these districts. In Allahabad and Faizabad districts the BSP got one seat each in 1989 which were retained in 1991 elections. The BSP also lost some of its seats in 1991 election where there were seats in 1989. For example it had three seats from Bijnor, two seats from Mau and one seat from Moradabad which it lost in 1991 election. Looking at BSP's performance from the angle of number of seats won by it in '89 and retained in 1991 election it can be said that there was not much difference because with the exception of one seat it got equal number of seats in both the elections. The opinion of the BSP leadership on its performance is that their party has increased its hold in which it has managed to capture seats from other districts of the U.P.

Table 1.3

Seats won by BSP in 1989 & 1991 in U.P.
Assembly elections

Name of the districts	1989	1991
(1) Bijnor	3	-
(2) Banda	-	3
(3) Azamgarh	2	3
(4) Allahabad	1	1
(5) Faizabad	1	1
(6) Jalaun	3	1
(7) Moradabad	1	-
(8) Mirzapur	-	1
(9) Mau	2	1
(10) Jaunpur	-	1
(11) Hamirpur	-	-

A comparison is made between 1985 and 1989 election of only those seats which were won by the BSP in 1989 election to find out which political party has been at loss with the entry of BSP in to electoral competition. This is done in table 1.4:

Table 1.4

A Comparative representation of the BSP and other political parties in those constituencies of Uttar Pradesh assembly where BSP has won in 1989 which were previously represented in 1985 by other political parties.

1989 Constituency	1985 Name of the party
AFZALGARH	INC
NAGINA	INC
NAJIBABAD	INC
THAKURDWARA	ICJ
JALALPUR	IND
NAWABGANJ	LKD
MAU	CPI
MADHOGARH	INC
KONCH	INC
ORAI	INC
MOHAMMADABAD	
GOHNA	INC
SA RAI MER	INC
PHUL PUR	ICJ

It is seen from the table that it was Congress Party which was at loss in 1989 election. In these constituencies the Congress lost eight seats to BSP and Indian Congress

(J) lost its two seats and LKD one seat and CPI one seat. All the three seats in Bijnor were won by BSP in 1989 which was previously held by Congress in 1985 election. Likewise in Jalaun district also BSP won three seats which were won previously by the Congress in 1985. Similarly Congress lost its hold over the seats of Saraimir (Azamgarh) and Mohammadabad Gohna (Mau) in 1989 to BSP.

Table - 1.5

BSP's Performance in Punjab : Lok Sabha Election - 1989

Distt.	Turn Out	Winner % Party	Runner up % Party	Third	Fourth
AMRITSAR	59.1	47.0 IND	25.8 INC	18.3 BJP	3.1 SADB
BHATINDA	61.8	53.2 SADM	18.4 INC	15.7 CPI	5.9 SADB
FARIDKOT	64.3	48.6 SADM	26.6 INC	9.7 BSP	8.4 SADB
FEROZPUR	64.9	30.9 IND	25.9 INC	18.8 JD	17.0 BSP
GURDASPUR	58.8	40.5 INC	26.3 SADM	23.6 BJP	3.2 BSP
HOSHIARPUR	59.3	32.2 INC	19.7 BSP	18.3 CPM	17.7 BJP
JULLUNDUR	59.1	48.1 JD	33.4 INC	13.2 BSP	1.0 IND
LUDHIANA	59.8	53.5 SADM	33.5 INC	5.1 BSP	3.8 SADB
PATIALA	63.6	46.6 IND	33.7 INC	8.1 SADB	4.4 BSP
PHILLAUR	60.1	29.3 BSP	27.9 SADB	27.7 INC	12.2 CPM
ROPAR	68.5	60.4 SADM	27.5 INC	6.7 BSP	3.6 CPI
SANGRUR	71.7	36.7 SADM	20.9 CPM	16.2 INC	10.2 SADB
TARN TARAN	63.6	89.2 SADM	8.0 INC	0.9 IND	0.7 IND

BSP's Electoral Performance in the Punjab:

Table 1.5 shows the party's performance in the Punjab where BSP's electoral performance were. It won ^{one} parliamentary seat, where it contested 12 seats out of 13 with total of 684,763 votes polled in its favour which comes out to 8.62% votes of overall votes polled in 1989 Punjab Lok Sabha election. In Phillaur, where its candidate Harbhajan Singh Lakha got 29.3% of votes, where voters turnout was 60.1%. In this constituency there was a very close contest between BSP, Shiromani Akhali Dal (B) and Congress Party. The Shiromani Akhali Dal which was on 2nd position got 27.9% of votes and Congress candidate got 27.7% of votes. Out of the total seats contested by BSP it was only this party's candidate which won the seat with the lowest percentage of votes. It was the Shiromani Akhali Dal (M) which got the highest per cent of votes in Taran-Taran constituency with 89.2% of votes. The BSP Candidate was runners up in Hoshiarpur where it polled 19.7% of votes and the Congress candidate won the seat with the 32.2 per cent of votes with the Communist Party (Marxist) polling 18.3% of votes was at 3rd position. Likewise, in Jullundar (13.2%), Faridkot (9.7%), Ropar (6.7%) and Ludhiana (5.1%) its candidates were at 3rd position. One of its candidate got 17.0% votes in Ferozepur and stood fourth where an independent candidate won the seat polling 30.9% of votes where voters turn out was as high as 64.9%

Table 1.6

A comparative representative of BSP and other Political parties in those constituencies of Punjab Assembly where BSP has won in 1992 which were previously represented in 1985 by the other Political parties.

1992	1985
Name of the constituency	Name of the Party
Adampur	Shiromni Akhali Dal (SAD)
Balachaur	Independent
Banga	SAD
Grah Shanker	INC
Mahilpur	SAD
Sham Chaurasi	INC
Bhadaur	SAD
Dharam Kot	INC
Sherpur	SAD

Table 1.6 shows the comparison made between 1985 and 1992 election of only those seats which were won by the BSP candidates in 1992 Punjab Assembly Election to find out which political parties have been at loss with the coming of BSP. Out of nine seats won by the BSP, six seats were reserved but all those who won the seats were from the scheduled caste community. In 1985 out of these nine seats five were captured by the Shiromani Akhali Dal, three seats by Congress and one seat by an independent candidate. In 1992 election, none of the Akhali groups contested the election and because of low polling the contest became easier and the Congress polled largest number of votes followed by the BSP. Because of the absence of Akhali groups in the election it is difficult to say that BSP's gain is at the cost of Shiromani Akhali Dal or the Congress because Congress itself

was highly discredited in the Punjab. Most of the votes in this election were polled on the basis of a clear cut party support and group solidarity therefore even those candidates who polled very little votes managed to win their seats. One of the reasons for BSP's success could be that the Republican Party of India and the Scheduled Caste Federation had also some support in some of the regions of Punjab. The party of scheduled caste had been persistently strong in at least six elections in Jullundur district which had always been in the top five support districts and where the scheduled caste population was over 30%, which is the highest among the districts in the state. The Scheduled Caste party had also been persistently strong in the surrounding region especially in Ludhiana, Patiala and Hoshiarpur districts. Ferozepur district had also been frequently among the top support districts and Bhatinda, Ropar and Sangrur districts had been in that category. Because of high concentration of scheduled castes in some of regions of the Punjab it became quite easy for the BSP to mobilize the people.

Table 1.7

A comparative representation of BSP and other Political parties in those constituencies of Madhya Pradesh Assembly where BSP has won in 1990 which were previously represented in 1985 by other political parties.

1990	1985
<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Name of the Party</u>
Pamgarh	INC
Deotalsab.	INC

The BSP's performance in Madhya Pradesh : In 1989 Lok Sabha elections, it contested 35 seats getting 842,972 of total votes which comes out to be 4.28% of votes. Its performance in this state in terms of votes is second highest after Uttar Pradesh but in terms of percentage of votes polled it is 3rd after Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. As far as its performance in state Assembly election is concerned it got two seats in 1990 out of which one was a reserved seat. These two Assembly seats won by the BSP in 1990 election were previously held by the Congress. So it was again the Congress Party which lost some of its seats to the BSP.

From the above it can be easily inferred that the support base of the BSP is more or less consolidated thereby making it an uphill task for other parties especially Congress to make inroads in this section of electorate and thereby manipulating them to their advantage. In terms of votes, this makes it difficult for any other political

party to lure this section irrespective of their large quantum of concessions and offers. From this, we safely arrive at the logical conclusion that wherever a BSP candidate is contesting the election support from this section of the society will be forthcoming.

CONCLUSION

BSP has emerged as a major political force in U.P. and Punjab. The Party's influence can be seen in other Hindi belt states like M.P. and Haryana where the party has not won many seats but increased its percentage of votes considerably. This increase reflects the BSP achieving its objective and increasing the social and political awareness of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

An inference could be drawn from the above that the party has achieved success in establishing a distinct (distinct from the Congress and the Gandhian variant of welfare policies and measures for depressed section of the society) identity of its own and has carved a niche for itself in the sociological map of India. Though not in terms of actual number of seats, which it has won but in terms of percentage of votes which it has garnered in its favour. This has an important national level consequence that ^{is} by breaking the traditional support base of Congress it proved instrumental in the defeat of Congress in many Assembly as well as Lok Sabha seats mostly in U.P. and some other pockets of the country. Moreover, in the contemporary days, when the ruling parties enjoy only razor thin majority, the importance of a few M.P's and M.L.A's is of great significance. However, slightly misplaced here but nevertheless of immense theoretical importance, the kind of BSP electoral performance i.e. having more success at Assembly poll as compared to Lok Sabha election confirms

one of the major political sociological finding that the importance of caste as a winning determinant in the electoral performance increases as one goes from city to town to village. From this it can be deduced that caste plays an important role in the success of a party and has proved to be its major plank and an issue of emotional appeal (necessary for mobilizing support). However in some constituencies some contradictory (i.e. voting beyond just caste consideration) trends has also been noticed. This fact is well reflected in the success of party Candidates in some general constituencies where voting on cross cutting lines is quite implicit in electoral success owing to the presence of party's greatest handicap in electoral success i.e., even distribution of population of its major constituent of support base of the Scheduled castes and Schedule tribes.

In terms of interactions between society and polity it can be said that in a diverse social and political structures pulls in the form of different interests and identities assertion lead to ideological heterogeneity of a party. Under such circumstance it is practically impossible for any party to remain immune from social and situational pulls generated in overall social, political, economic and cultural process. However, in the context of the BSP despite the presence of above mentioned 'pulls' the party has managed to retain its ideological purity to a large extent as it is evident from the fact that it still sticks to the

philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar in the form of anti Brahminism, bridging the status inequalities. Moreover, Mr. Kanshi Ram recognises the presence of these various pulls and strains and is ready and eager to interpret Ambedkarism in the light of changing political and social configuration in a given socio-economic milieu.

The BSP shows faith in the Constitution of India and considers it as an effective instrument which can lift the depressed section of society from morass. However, this faith in the Constitution leads to a paradoxical situation of the fact that on the one hand BSP leadership in their attempt to form their distinct identity is very critical of Gandhi, at the same time it accepts the Constitution uncritically which has strong underpinnings and overtones of Gandhian Philosophy. Perhaps they resolve this vexed issue by bringing Dr. Ambedkar into the picture who is regarded as the father and chief architect of the Indian Constitution.

In the end of the discussion, under the heading of ideology, the fact that this party does not want to identify itself with any opposition party because it considers them too (like Congress) as being representative of Brahminical force and status quoists. This kind of perception of the opposition parties confirms to Dr. Rajni Kothari's perception of opposition as a product of break in the Congress ideological block.

Selfrespect and selfdetermination are the two (both of them inextricably interrelated) major planks of this party. It is through them that this party distinguishes itself from the Congress variant of welfare policies and measures towards depressed sections of the society as it considers that concessions and benefits accrue to these sections by the Congress Govt. are of the nature of alms or charity.

Contrary to the general and popular perception, the party also exhibits diversified support base occasionally in trans-caste ^{terms (here) on} i.e. class basis (however in the Indian context due to presence of what is known as the caste-class correspondence it is difficult to make such water tight compartments and paradoxically such transcendence is also facilitated for this party through caste-class correspondence) This can be verified by the fact that the BSP has got votes of other castes also in reserved as well as in general constituencies. This is also reinforced by the fact that many of its candidates belong to other castes and social groups like OBCs and Muslims. However, this party does not go for big compromises which can alter its fundamental character and this also explains that why alliances and seat adjustments are an anathema to this party even at a very heavy price because these two political strategies might have added large number of seats in its electoral score. Drawing people from other religions and caste groups does not become an imperative only on account of its ideology that the party stands for all depressed

section of society because the BSP can not win seats only on the SCs /STs/^{support} and therefore has to broaden its base. It is because of this reason the party has to adopt an ideology which reflects the shapes and aspirations of all the depressed section of the society.

As argued earlier, the environment and the context from which the BSP leadership is drawn has got enormous impact on the behaviour of the leader. Thus a clear and proper appreciation of the party choices, policies and preferences could be made only if one does a thorough examination of the social background of its leadership. It is quite obvious after making ^{an} analysis in the chapter titled 'social base and leadership' ^{and} One can safely arrive at conclusion that a major chunk of leadership comes from the rural based educated people. Apart from this leadership is also drawn from other walks of life like the professionals e.g. lawyers, doctors and people from the salaried classes. It would amount to be an exaggeration to infer from the fact alone that the party leadership has an elite structure as most of them hail from modest backgrounds. Nevertheless seen in a relativistic term these people are quite highly placed in comparison to those people and section of society to which they represent. Numerically the party organizational structure is dominated and manned by people belonging to a young agegroup, unlike the Congress and other national parties. The record of its leadership reveals the fact that all these people who

provide leadership to this party have previous records of some kind of training in public life as it is evident from the fact that many of them come from farmer or labour organisations and some of them have even represented municipal bodies and other district level organisations. Some of them have even shown keen interest in social works.

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