

**BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY IN U.P. AND BIHAR:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY (1986-1996)**



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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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*Dedicated*  
to  
**my father**



CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY IN U.P. AND BIHAR : A COMPARATIVE STUDY (1986-1996)**, submitted by **MD. AFTAB ALAM** in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) of this University, is his original work and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other Degree of this University or any other University to the best of our knowledge.

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## **PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This dissertation work is a part of M.Phil programme of study in the centre for Political studies, JNU, New Delhi.

The phenomenal growth of BJP in Indian Politics after mid-80s onwards and especially in the North Indian region prompted me to take up a study on the BJP in the two key north Indian states i.e. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Bihar and U.P. provide a contrasting picture as far as the growth of BJP in the north Indian region is concerned. This difference in the context of BJP's growth is also more relevant in the electoral politics of these states in the 1990s.

Although, BJP had success in increasing its vote-share and seat-share and expanding its social support base in U.P., it did feel relatively weaker in these terms in the state of Bihar. In U.P. it even formed the government in 1991 and still maintains the status of the single largest party. But, over a period of time, its vote share and seat share has stagnated in U.P. especially after the political polarisation around caste lines on the Mandal issue. In Bihar also, it did succeed in achieving the status of the opposition party in the assembly and even giving a big blow to the ruling Janata Dal (a predominantly backward caste based party) in Bihar.

It is these political developments concerning the BJP in the state politics of Bihar and U.P. which constitute the core of the study.

But before this, a comprehensive understanding of the party and these states is greatly required. There is also an attempt to locate BJP in these states politics in its pre-1986 phase by linking the analyses with its predecessor party the Baratiya Jana Sangh (BJS). After this, there is a treatment of BJP's performance in electoral politics of Bihar and U.P. from mid-80s onwards.

This dissertation work is divided into four broad Chapters. Chapter I is titled as "Understanding the BJP" in which an attempt is made to understand the party's ideology, leadership, support-base and mobilisation strategies. Chapter II titled "Understanding the States" attempts to get an overall picture of the socio-

economic, in demographic and political character of these two states. Chapter III titled "BJP in the State Politics of U.P. and Bihar: A Retrospective Analysis" attempts an analysis of its gradual evolution in these two states, its broad policy orientations and support base in its pre-1986 phase. Chapter IV titled "BJP in the State Politics of Bihar and U.P. (1986-1996) takes an over-view of its performance in the electoral politics of U.P. and Bihar.

While beginning this study, there is a great limitation as far as sources of the study are concerned because very few books directly deal with the BJP in the state politics of Bihar and U.P., particularly in the last decade.

Analyses and observations are made out of the books dealing with the overall politics of Bihar and U.P. For more convenience in getting hindsight in its post-80s phase there is also more reliance on the articles appearing in journals, magazines and newspapers dealing with overall politics as well as the BJP in these states.

For this dissertation work I greatly acknowledge the patience and kind support of my supervisor, Professor Rakesh Gupta. I also acknowledge the contributions of my elder brother Mr. Md. Mokhtar Alam and my friends at JNU in giving me a lot of support and encouragement.

Jawaharlal Nehru University  
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**MD AFTAB ALAM**

## INTRODUCTION

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) represents the right of the centre on the political spectrum in India. Its predecessor, the Jana Sangh was formed as a political party in 1952 just before the first general elections after independence. It was systematically devoted to the promotion of political Hinduism or Hindutva, a term used by V. Savarkar i.e. promotion of the political interest of Hindu majority which is a kind of Hindu majoritarianism. It was then believed that it was possible to mobilise the mass of Hindus and put the Hindutva factor at the centre stage of Indian political scene in the after-math of the partition of India on the basis of Hindu Muslim divide.

Shyama Prasad Mokherjee, a member of Nehru cabinet resigned from the ministry on certain issues and formed the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) saying that Congress party was paying much attention to the Hindu refugees coming from Pakistan.

Ostensibly, Jana Sangh wanted to form a different and distinct political party as from Rashtritya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), then considered as a militant - Hindu cultural outfit. But, from the very beginning Jana Sangh was seen as the political wing of RSS. Its initial support came from the Hindu refugees who settled down in Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Western U.P. Its initial strength came extremely with its close ties with the RSS. Both these organisations were attached to the promotion of political Hinduism. Its social base was more or less the duplication or replication of RSS's traditional support base.

From the very beginning it was antagonistic towards the Nehruvian secular and social-democratic project. The first generation of Jana Sangh leaders



emphasised the organic content of Hindu society, declaration of Hindi language as national language, opposition to Urdu and on the confrontational policy towards Pakistan. It was from the onset an anti-communist and against radical economic programmes. It was then clearly trying to create a place for itself at the right end of the political spectrum.

Jana Sangh then failed to become a major force in the politics of post-Independent India despite its claim to be true representative of the national aspirations of Hindus, since, it failed to transcend the limitations of its origin. i.e. its close initial ties with Hindi speaking areas and support to conservative economic programmes from the onset the party was occupied with northern issues. In addition, its interpretation of Hinduism was restrictive and exclusive and thus a limited support base mainly confined to conservative upper castes and the town based entrepreneurial classes. These in the long run proved to be a serious disadvantage for the party. Scholarship on the Jana Sangh and the political instruments that it employed in namely communal riots (after 1964) has been divided over whether it was a middle class party, petty bourgeoisie, bourgeoisie or big bourgeoisie party.

Jana Sangh initially did not perform well in first three general elections in 1952, 1957 and 1962. Then, Nehruvian consensus i.e. secularism and economic and social democracy thinned its support base. The 1967 general election was critical for the growth of Jana Sangh. This provided it a crucial opening into political system. It won 35 Lok Sabha seats and more than 9 per cent of the popular votes. It even participated in the ministries of two crucial north Indian States i.e. U.P. and Bihar.

Its expansion was then closely linked with the expansion and growth of non-Congress alternative. It did not have then credibility and acceptability since it

was regarded as a Hindu communal party. It tried to neutralise its communal image by forging alliance with non-Congress coalition.

D.D. Upadhyay a prominent and influential Jana Sangh leader convinced the RSS leaders that it could not hope to grow except by aligning with non-Congress parties. It was then considered as the most convenient option when they realised that it was not yet possible for Jana Sangh to have an independent trajectory for itself. In early 70s, a non-centrist rightist party was at disadvantage mainly because Mrs. Indira Gandhi managed to build a considerable support for left of the centre Congress party.

In this period of impasse for Jana Sangh, it gave rise to two lines. First line was advocated by Balraj Madhok i.e. to return back to militant Hindutva nationalism. Second line was identified with Atal Bihari Vajpayee favouring a moderate line which advocated a possibility of alliances with a spectrum of non-Congress political parties. At this point, Jana Sangh was prepared to mobilise support around social and rural issues by softening its line on Hindutva factor. It placed emphasis on the to tolerant humanitarian line of Hinduism. It then tried to underplay other Hindu organisation and adopted a sort of moderate centrist line vis-a-vis political Hinduism.

The anti-emergency movements of mid-70s provided it the most critical opportunity yet to establish as never before its acceptability and broaden its support base. The discussion leading to the formation by Janata party was another moment seized by Jana Sangh to become the important part of an opposition block against Congress party. It was also then the back-bone of J.P. movement. It became the only organizationally and ideologically cohesive party in the Janata coalition which captured power at the Centre after defeating the Congress party in 1977 general elections. More remarkably, Jana Sangh bagged 92 seats in Lok Sabha, largest share by one of the constituent party in

the Janata coalition. After the breakdown of Janata coalition on the dual membership issue i.e. Jana Sangh members link with the RSS and due to the ambitions of Charan Singh. Jana Sangh re-christened itself as Baharatiya Janata Party in 1980.

Jana Sangh then took the benefits in the wake of a shift in the location of the party system itself i.e. decline of one party dominance, decline of Congress party in electoral terms in some of the key states and prospects of the emergence of non-Congress alternative in the party system.

The 1970s and 80s was the crystallisation of the contestations debate about political change. It was a debate about the regime itself. Jana Sangh tried to influence the debate and supported the democratic process. The strategy of moderation in the ongoing political development during this period by its leadership then paid rich dividends to the party.

Since mid 1980s there emerged some crucial moments in the entire post Independent Indian history. BJP very tactfully and masterly succeeded in appropriating those crucial historical moments to its large political and electoral gains.

BJP saw a clear shift towards the right of centre on overall Indian political scene and hence prepared itself to appropriate this political space. This rightward shift was further accelerated in the wake of deepening secessionism in Punjab and North-Eastern states. It tried to whip up a nationalist fervour to win over the common masses.

During the mid 80s, Congress Party under Rajiv Gandhi leadership is made numerous historic compromises (in pure Gramscian terms) i.e. opening of the locks of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in U.P. and compromise on Muslim Women Bill i.e. (Shah Bano case) with the Muslim clergy, which together created the genie of communalism which shook the entire political scene to its core. These together provided an opening for the BJP to chalk out new strategy that would enable the party to take full advantage of Congress's historic mistakes.

In 1988, BJP launched the Ayodhya campaign with the performance of shilanyas near the Babri Masjid. This event was followed by series of communal riots all over the country.

Communal violence also helped the BJP to harvest the dividends. Its growth was closely linked to the kind of communal polarization taking place in different parts of the country.

BJP's growth is not just the result of political mobilisation. It is as much a product of a changing relationship between state and society or crises of state over the last ten years owing to the general rise of right across the world with the collapse of socialism and rise of market state has retreated. For the last forty years Congress has been a power-centric or government-centric party. Congress leaders never tried to develop party organisation as an instrument of mobilisation in societal arena. BJP entered in to this arena which went uncontested.

There has been a crisis of Congress's Nehruvian project and a crisis of legitimacy and Congress hegemony. Its regime efficacy was gradually undermined. It raised serious doubts in the minds of upper middle classes (who are mainly status quoist) about the ability of Congress party to protect and ensure their dominant interests. So, they shifted to the BJP as an alternative to Congress with the hope that it will preserve their conservative interests.

There are large sections of Indian middle class who felt alienated in the political system. There was a seething alienation from organised politics. BJP thus worked with the logic of alienation of these classes by articulating and giving voice to sources of frustration and aggression or latent violence which needed a little spark to get manifested. One common element through the ✓ Ayodhya campaign was that it articulated the grievances against the state. So, overt text was Ayodhya but covert text was disenchantment with the Congress rule of four decades. BJP gainfully articulated the public anger against Congress for scalating crises in Punjab, North East and Jammu and Kashmir.

Thus, communal mobilisation combined with opposition to the state and Congress dominated political system and actual changes in the party situations in Indian politics helped it to grow. In the context of Bihar and U.P.'s state politics also, BJP's growth can best be grounded into the actual shifts in the party situations in the states politics and its overt communal mobilisation around Ayodhya issue. As a political party, its performance in the state's elections also provide an important guide to its rise in the states politics of U.P. and Bihar.

In U.P. it even formed the government on its own and in Bihar it achieved the status of main opposition party in state assembly by replacing the Congress party. But in a situation of political polarisations around Mandal issue and

subsequent political assertion of the backward castes in the state politics put great checks on its what seemed to be unstoppable growth. In this situation, it faced almost stagnation and got stuck to the a particular percent of votes and seats in the elections. This shows a limited supported base of BJP in these states which was built by it over a period of time. This limitations raised the questions about its ideological appeal and mobilization strategy. Thus, a tactical shift in these aspects was adopted by BJP leaders to create further space in the poltics of these states. There became more inclination on the part of BJP's leadership to soften the militant Hindutva stand and to align with numerous social and mainly rural caste groups to expand its limited support base. Its support to Bahujan Samaj Party, a predominantly Dalit based paty to from the government in U.P. and its alliance with Samata Party in Bihar which is predominantly Kurmi-Koeris based party. (the two powerful caste groups after Yadavs in Bihar) provide a testimony to the tactical shift in the strategy of BJP's leaders in further improving its electoaryl prospects in the state politics of U.P. and Bihar.

This dissertation is basically a descriptive and comparative study of BJP in these states mainly concerned with the above discussed development.

The first two chapters in the dissertation are mainly the preliminary exercise to understand the party and the states too. The last two chapters mainly focus on the election studies and BJP's performance in the state elections in these states as well as some of the crucial parliamentary elections. Because it is in the electroal arena where a party's strengths and weaknesses come out clearly.

## CHAPTER I

### UNDERSTANDING THE PARTY: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON BJP

This Chapter wholly focuses on the independent scholarly works which constitute both a general assessment and a critique of the party's policies; programmes, projects and orientations.

Any work on BJP in isolation is not possible and if done then will be deceptive. The success-story of BJP is closely linked with its parental organisations like RSS, Hindu Mahasabha, Bhartiya Jana Sangh (hereafter BJS), its other affiliates like VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) Bajrang Dal etc.

Most of the literatures surveyed here belong to a specific time-period i.e. 1980s and 90s, except one very important work by "Craig Baxter" titled "*Jana Sangha-A biography of Indian Political Party*" (1969).

The biography of Jana Sangha by Baxter is an effort to present an historical picture of the Jana Sangh, a party which following the 1967 elections matured into a potent force on the Indian political scene; both in national parliament and in the legislatures of several of the Indian states. It employs the categories of "Ideology; leadership: "organisation" and "electoral analysis".

He has conducted the study of Jana Sangha for two purposes; "first to determine its place within the Indian political system" and second to examine its part in religio-political movement that seem to be gaining

strength in several Afro-Asian Countries"<sup>1</sup> which is not the immediate concern of this paper.

The first two chapters describe briefly the history and development of the Hindu Mahasabha; the political ancestor of the Jana Sangha and the RSS; the organisational and ideological forerunner. The other chapters deal with the origin of BJS and its electoral performances upto 1967 general elections.

"The Hindu Mahasabha began as a protest - albeit mild-against the Muslim League. The official historian of the Mahasabha traces the organisation from the two early movements in Bengal and Punjab. These two provinces and Maharashtra have provided much of the leadership of the Mahasabha."<sup>2</sup>

In 1907, soon after the founding of the Muslim League; the United Bengal Hindu Movement was formed. Prakash describes this movement as a direct response to the founding of the Muslim League as well as a result of the turmoil in Bengal resulting from the partition of the province during the viceroyalty of the Lord Curzon. Also, founded in 1907, the Punjab Hindu Sabha became the spearhead of the movement that eventually led to the establishment of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha in Dec.1914 which arose from the need to counteract the growing influence of the Muslim League.

It grew as an adjunct of the Congress when it included many of the nationalist leaders, like Lala Lajpat Rai, and Madan Mohan Malviya who

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Baxter, *Jana Sangh - A Biography of Indian Political Party*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Indra Prakash, *A Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement*, IInd ed., Delhi, 1971.



served both the Congress and the Mahasabha as president. This cooperation between Congress and Mahasabha could not last long and by the late 1920s a gradual break with Congress came. This period signifies the beginning of an Indian Hindu organisation with a strong independent; bold and clear cut policy taking up matters which concerned the whole Indian community and judging them primarily from the Hindu point of view. This also signifies its decline into a bigoted communalist organisation.

For Baxter; Indian society and politics are influenced by several concurrent conflicts in the socio-political system. The first and oldest conflict on the sub-continent divides the older Dravidian culture from the newer Aryan cultures. A second and more violent conflict was the rivalry between Hinduism and Islam. The third conflict was the struggle between modernism and traditionalism - between Westernization and Sanskritization.

In three of these conflicts Jana Sangha takes a stand under the ideological influence of RSS which was founded in 1925 at Nagpur by Dr.Hedgewar. It is dedicated to revival of Hinduism and setting up of a Hindu Rashtra in India. It then mainly concentrated on the training of the cadres through "Sakhas" and expansion of its organisational structures. From the very onset; it was anti-Congress and anti-Left parties and their programmes. To promote its aggressive Hindu nationalism, RSS used ancient Hindu symbols and talked of creating an unified homogeneous Hindu nation.

While RSS did not take the almost pro-British stand of the Mahasabha, the organisation did not come out strongly against the British, as did the Congress after the war broke out in 1930s. Formally; RSS did not take part in active politics but one writer notes; "It was non-political only in one

sense it did not take part in elections nor was it organised for electoral purposes."<sup>3</sup>

"The Jana Sangh resulted from a combination of a partyless leader; Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and a leaderless party; the RSS. The organisation of the Jana Sangh was based largely on the RSS supplemented by a mixed bag of others and possessed but one nationally known leader, S.P. Mookerjee. Of course, the RSS was not only the source of membership for the Jana Sangh, although it was the primary source of its organisational strength. The Jana Sangh stated its fundamentals, "as one country; one nation, one culture and the rule of law". In its economic programme, both its land policy and industrial policy tried to steer a middle course between conservatism and radicalism. Pakistan and Kashmir were the focal points of the proposals on foreign policy; which was to be guided primarily by the enlightened national self-interest. The party proposed the decentralization of administrative powers to local units "as much as possible with the provincial framework."<sup>4</sup>

The social base support to Jana Sangh was provided by princes and jagirdars; certain sections of industrialists and urban middle class engaged in entrepreneurial activities or urban Hindu shopkeepers.

Baxter in the fourth chapter of his book studies the electoral performance of Jana Sangh; out of which few datas can easily be extracted. In 1951 general elections; it secured 3 seats and 3.06 percent of votes, which resulted in recognition of Jana Sangh as a national party. In assembly

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<sup>3</sup> Myron-Weiner - *Party Politics in India*, pp.182-3.

<sup>4</sup> Craig Baxter, *Op. Cit.* 1969, p.10.

elections in the states, it won 35 seats (out of 725 seats it contested) as secured 2.76% of total votes.

In 1957 general elections, it won 4 seats but increased its share of the poll from 3.06% to 5.63%. In the contests for state assemblies; the party won 46 seats as compared to 35 in 1952 and party polled 4.03% of the vote. In 1962 elections, it won 14 and secured 6.44% of total vote polled. In 1967, it made a break-through and won 35 Lok Sabha seats and secured 9.4% of votes polled.

The Jana Sangh in the 1967 elections entered into alliances on a much wider scale than in the earlier elections. It contracted alliances with Swatantra Party in Gujarat and Rajasthan and with other parties in Madhya Pradesh. In 1967 elections, the Jana Sangha appeared to be taking steps both toward moderation and toward alliances. The close of the 1967 was a critical juncture for the Jana Sangh. But, Baxter, in his electoral analysis on Jana Sangh fails to enumerate factors responsible for the subsequent swing in its seat-share and vote-share since first general elections in Independent India.

Baxter, in the end predicted that "the future of Jana Sangha would depend not only on the mood of the voter but on the party's position on alliances and policy changes. He concluded that "Jana Sangha was considered as a communal party which was reached on two bases; first, the party was almost exclusively Hindu in membership, control and support. Secondly, many of the tenants of the Jana Sangh were anathema to Muslims and Christians, who with considerable justification fear the emergence of the party in the northern Indian areas. But finally, he makes it implicit that the Jana Sangha is not so rigidly Hindu as the Mahasabha was. There is a fine line between a communal party and a

nationalist party. The Jana Sangha for him seems to appear to straddle that line."<sup>5</sup>

*"The Brotherhood in Saffron: The RSS and Hindu Revivalism"* by Walter K. Anderson and Shridhar D. Damle presents an historical account of the development of Hindu revivalism culminating into an organisation i.e. R.S.S. It uses the categories of "ideology," "organisation" and "leadership" to explain the growth of RSS and its implications in political terms. This book is significant as far as some chapters on its affiliates and the debate on RSS's dilemma in politics are concerned. Because, they ultimately reflect on the rightist politics pursued by BJP (previously BJS) in Indian politics. This book is strong in objectivity and unbiased historical and structural narration and analysis. They combine historical narrative with social science analysis laced with measured helpings of reference of religiosity and spiritualism of Hindus. They offer lively sketches of the three leaders of the RSS who span three decades of the life history of the organisation: Hedgewar, Golwalkar and Deoras - tracing carefully the impact of each on the "family" that is the RSS organisation, and its political affiliate, Jan Sangh and then since 1980; BJP.

They introduce us quite elaborately to the organisational order and map of the RSS to the modalities of building a disciplined spread of well groomed cadres dedicated to the cult of the "family" and to the hierarchy of its leadership with considerable insight.

Anderson and Damle brings to our mind the philosophical orientation of the RSS distilled from the Shakti cult of Hinduism. We get introduced to two RSS's. One is virile reformist Hindu organisation that is committed to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp.188-89.

rebuild Hindus in the mould of patriotic warriors who are convinced that only a united Hindu family can construct a strong invincible state free of the degrading vices of untouchability, worn-out totems and taboos and also of gross social and cultural inequalities.

"The Hindutva of the RSS claims direct inheritance from Vivekananda, Sri Aurobinda and other sages of the Indian renaissance. The fountain head of its strength is the Gita; the advaita Vedanta philosophy of the ancient Hindus and the charisma of the epic heroes; Ram, Arjun and Krishna".<sup>6</sup>

RSS theoreticians maintain that the social body functions well only when individuals perform their economic; social and religious duties (dharma). The founders of the RSS concluded that the Hindu social body was weak and disorganised because "dharma" was neither clearly understood nor correctly observed while the disintegration of Hindu society was perceived as advancing at a rapid pace in the contemporary period, the malady is traced back at least to the Islamic invasions of India when it is alleged creative Hindu thought ceased to inform society about new ways to respond to changing conditions.

The founders of the RSS - born in the year 1925 in the immediate aftermath of the worst period of Hindu-Muslim riots in India prior to the mid-40s-retrieved from India's hoary past and the soul of Hinduism, a grammar of social and national body-building. Under Hedgewar, the RSS remained almost entirely a Maharashtrian organisation. It might have captured thousands of Hindu hearts. It did not fire the Indian imagination.

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<sup>6</sup> Walter K. Anderson and Shridhar D. Damle, (ed.) - *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and Hindu revivalism*, Westview, Boulder (Col.), 1987.

It is the other RSS; the political movement; which brought the organisation into prominence. That was in the 1960s when the original hesitation to roll in to the political life of the nation yielded to a bold decision to create political affiliates. Before then, the RSS had won the appreciation of the Indians in the north as well as of the front-ranking leaders of the Congress Party, with its dedicated service to the hopeless streams of refugees that had poured into India from Pakistan immediately after the partition.

The political profile of the RSS is captured in the last two chapters of the book but even before, the reader gets intimation of the new incarnation. The "family" however, is in full shape before the RSS launches its political career.

This career is profiled in the book with a wealth of information spiced with sharp interpretative perceptions from the creation of the Jan Sangh party under the leadership of Dr. S.P. Mookerjee through the short; eventful life span of the amalgam of the Janata Party, to the launching of BJP. In this colorful unfolding of a quite complex political play, we see the increasing influence of RSS on its political affiliates. The narration ends with the election of L.K. Advani as BJP president in 1986, his second exaltation to that high position, and it sketches the upcoming fundamentalist upsurge around the Ram-mandir-Babri-mosque controversy in Ayodhya.

In this drama, we find a dynamic relationship coming into focus between BJP and the RSS supported mass passion organisations like VHP and Bajrang Dal. The narrative spot-lights an important point: throughout a volatile period in Indian politics, RSS is single minded in the pursuit of its political objective which is the establishment of Hindu rashtra even when other organisations including BJP at times flirt with secular parties. The RSS called the final shots in Jan Sangh's relations with the Janata Party

as it did once again in getting the BJP leadership snap the party's ties with the Janata Dal and the National Front.

There are a set of writers who not only engage themselves in a general assessment of the emergent Hindutva wave in different forms and shape under the overarching rightist umbrella whose identified constituents are the RSS, BJP and Shiv Sena, but also provide a critique of the new spectre that haunts India. Among them; Jayant K. Lele and his works occupy a prominent place. His "*Hindutva : The Emergence of the Right*": is a conceptually coherent and eruditely persuasive "critique" of the "project" of Hindutva with which BJP is greatly attached.

In Jayant K. Lele's view; the current rejuvenated phase of neo-Hindu militancy is only a contemporary manifestation of a process that has been going on almost since India's transition to a class society. "Situated in the broad sweep of history" as he puts it, today's Hindutva project brings out most vividly the three most essential characteristics of all its past manipulations. In its intentions it is hegemonic, homogenising and pedagogic, all at the same time and in completely inter-related ways".<sup>7</sup>

The three essential characteristics are : hegemonic appropriation of social and cultural capital; the homogenisation of multiple Hindu identities, beliefs and practices by subsuming them under a common Hindu rubric and "pedagogic violence" by which he means the transmission of cultural knowledge in such a way as to prevent the "cognitive competence" of the "lower orders of Hindu Society from objectively perceiving the reality of their lot and deflecting them from dreams of a less oppressive and more just social order. When strategies

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<sup>7</sup> Jayant K. Lele - *Hindutva: The Emergence of the Right*, 1992.

of minor concessions and co-option fail; exclusion and violence are resorted to."<sup>8</sup>

This is accompanied by an increasing invocation of a menacing other (the Muslim community) against the designs of which; in their internal, regional and global contexts; resolute Hindu solidarity is a must.

Dr. Lele makes a clarifying analysis of the factors that led to the "Saffronisation of the Shiv Sena" its transformation from an anti-South Indian outfit into the horrendous cadre-based engine of terror against Muslims and Dalits that it is today.

The loss of clout by the dominant rural Maratha elites who had initially regarded the Shiv Sena as a "Brahmin conspiracy" as well as "casino capitalism", the BJP's nexus with big business and the underworld and the organisation of "Shakhas" has all played their part in changing what was a "populist eruption" into the party that rules Maharashtra today with the BJP's cooperation. It is a case study in the politics of hate and greed masquerading as championship of Hindu interests.

For Lele; there is no denying that "Hindutva has engendered its own ✓ critique and response in the shape of the many Dalit and Bahujan formations that have sprung up to challenge hegemony and hierarchy".<sup>9</sup> And however fragmented and uneven they may be; they have acquired enough saliency to gain and remain in power in Bihar and cause all political parties to take them into the reckoning when it comes to electoral politics.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp.137-38.



There is another work which provides a critique of the Hindu right and reflects on their role in politics. "*Khaki Shorts. Saffron Flags: A critique of the Hindu Right*" by Tapan Basu, et. al. provides an analysis of the forces of Hindutva which lays bare its ideological; institutional and infrastructural underpinnings, particularly in the RSS and its politics; convenient and effective separation of the different arms of the "family", the RSS, the BJP and the VHP. They examine what they call the significance of the policies of Hindutva"; showing how a communalism that claims to represent the majority can present itself from 85% of the population; glossing over the multiple identifies of caste; sect; region; gender; class; belief that form its popularity.

They claim that Hindutva represents a modern Indian form of fascism; with more than superficial historical analogies with the conditions prevailing in the Weimar Republic. "The frequent representations of Hindutva as a spontaneous mass movement in search of a Hindu identity naturalises and suppresses a whole history of meticulously organised efforts towards a Hindu Rashtra."<sup>10</sup>

The thrust of the analysis rests, therefore, on an, in many ways sensible understanding of the Hindutva-wave as the outcome of decades of systematic work directed and masterminded by its central force; the RSS. The book is based on an analysis of available works on the Sangh Parivar, on the RSS and VHP publications, on a number of interviews with RSS, VHP and BJP leaders and activists; and on an interesting field-work covering the VHP - campaigns in UP in 1990 and 1991.

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<sup>10</sup> Tapan Basu, et al - *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993, p.1.

The authors enter into very interesting analysis of the VHP's use of visual representations and modern audio-visual technology. And there is good and innovative work on the position of the women in the Hindutva - campaign and on the effects of the televised serials; "Ramayan" and "Mahabharata".

The book consists of two main chapters. The first chapter is an analysis of the birth and gradual growth of the RSS into its present - day vast network of organisations. The chapter shows how the Sangh Parivar is held together by the "steel-frame of the RSS", as the authors aptly describe the RSS method of controlling the entire parivar through the deputed RSS full timers who make up the organisational backbone in all its subsidiaries or front organisations. The another claim that the present - day success of the Sangh-parivar is a logical consequence of decades of disciplined, well-managed organisational and ideological extension. The authors view is close to the way the RSS likes to view its own history, without endorsing it of course as an unbroken, consistent and thus irresistible effort to "organise Hindu Society: and "awaken the Hindu".

An alternative explanation of the success of Hindutva could be to see the saffron wave as an unintended consequence of the structural transformations of the Indian polity during the 1980s' the rapid breakdown of Congress legitimacy after 1985; the emergence of powerful regional opposition to centre; sometimes as separatism and violence; the emergence of a new and radical Muslim leadership; Congress's utilisation of the "majority communal card" in elections from 1980 onwards, the Shah Bano case and the agitation etc; which the book ignores in over all analysis.

The strongest point of the chapter is the excellent analysis and critique of the RSS ideology. It provides insights into the centrality of the "Muslim" as "the other" and the deep-running ambivalence in the RSS vis-a-vis modernity, insights conspicuously absent in e.g. Anderson and Damle" (1987) standwork on the RSS.

The authors characterise the attempts to understand present day communal Hindutva wave through its original institution by "colonial discourse" as limited. For them; Hindutva is not only the unfolding of an original design, it is also still essentially carried by the same social forces which were its original constituency -- the north Indian brahmin and bania communities. "Organised Hindutva emerges right from the beginning as an upper-caste reaction to efforts at self-assertion by downtrodden groups within the Hindu fold. The RSS, from the inception down to today; has been overwhelmingly middle class Brahmin or Bania composition; drawn together on the basis of a fear psychosis directed against other social groups : Muslims, most overtly; but by implication also lower caste Hindu".<sup>11</sup>

They confirm their original thesis by claiming that "in the last decade more people than ever before have to live in"bania-like conditions, living competitive; alienated and atomised lives in small-town India. Conditions under which what the authors call "new religiosity "thrives and drives the expanding bania middle class towards the natural habitat; the RSS; which provides both a god and a group"<sup>12</sup>. In villages the original sense of community is more rooted the argument goes; and thus the RSS has difficulties in establishing itself there, as its "objective" pre-conditions is

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp.16-17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp.35-36.

further developed in the claim that "Hindutva really became a wave because of the growth of the modern consumerist middle class. This class has now shifted its allegiances to the Sangh parivar which they believe; can serve their ultimate class interests."<sup>13</sup>

By providing a simplistic argument on the social bases of "Sangh parivar", the authors evade other greater challenges and questions; and any research on this issue must address these challenges and questions such as: Does this sort of combined historical and sociological determinism really help us to understand what the "essence" of Hindutva is all about? Is it that the social base of a movement always in the final analysis' determines its character and long term goals? If so; how can we then characterise the "real" nature of the "Sangh parivar" today; a rural mass-base (consisting of sizable chunks of OBCs and SCs and also dominant caste groups) in many places in north India and a backing South of Narmada; where the brahminical hegemony has historically been challenged; and thus in theory would present an environment unfavourable to a brahminical ideology? How do we account for the fact that Hindutva has broken through class, caste and regional barriers and become a country-wide wave? And how do we explain that this allegedly narrow brahmin-bania alliance has been able to do that? These questions should be addressed not only as a peculiarity of the Saffron wave; but also as an effect of the emerging structural transformation of Indian politics in a still more populist and national direction, a transformation produced in important ways by the general mediasation and concomitant expansion of the public sphere.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.92.

The second chapter of the book focuses on the VHP, its growth as well as some of its effects in U.P. and inside the RSS family itself: The chapter brings out how Hindutva has been popularised and, to lesser extent how the RSS in turn has become more manifestly Hinduised, that is dependent on the Ram-agitation and how this in several ways represents a break with the RSS tradition.

The authors take up the new aggressive version of "the Hindu" created by the VHP. The Ram agitation has produced a new and popularised version of Hinduism. It is based not on the classical revivalism of the RSS variety; seeking to revitalise a sick Hindu culture by reviving its alleged past strength and virtue; but on the majoritarian claim; that the tolerant; inherently secular Hindu culture and Hindu unity do already exist and that the only obstacle to their full blossoming is the "pseudo-secular" state, which ultimately represents nothing but the appeased Muslim "other".

The Sangh Parivar project is to homogenise Hinduism and to overcome its internal divisions-to overcome caste and region in favour of a generalised "massified", simple and emblematic Hinduness. This is sought to be done through the creation of the "angry" "Hindu" - the overtly political, agitating and attacking Hindu, which has been done but VHP type mobilisation and appropriated by BJP in political and electoral terms.

In the book, it is also clearly pointed out that apart from the successful negotiation the RSS has achieved through the VHP with the general popularisation" of public culture; and its skillful utilisation of audio-visual media, the Sangh Parivar has also started to tap and organise the growing visibility of women in the public. Tanika Sarkar's path-breaking study of this aspect is included in the book. It demonstrates that women have become mobilized for the communal cause in a big way not least in

the VHP-led agitations. It points out that although the mobilization of women in the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti so far has been confined mainly to urban middle class milieus; it is a rapidly growing trend that woman enter actively into communal agitations. The middle class complexion of the women's wing is explained as a result of the general middle class complexion of the RSS.

There is another book *"Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics: The Origins and Development of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh"* by Bruce D. Graham which has utilised the conventional categories of "organisation" "ideology", "leadership" and "electoral analysis" to analyse and study a political party. Bruce Graham's academic insight into the rise of the Hindu nationalist party called the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which grew over the years but always fell short of its targets to capture power, begins at the point when Shyama Prasad Mookerjee resigned from Nehru's cabinet on the issue of signing of Delhi pact on 8 April 1950 with Pakistan which he alleged as a "total surrender".

The book covers the first 16 years of its existence covering four general elections, 1951-52; 1957, 1962 and 1967, their outcome; the party's performance in Parliament and its agitational course. These kind of studies are in some way in convergence of other studies previously done on Jana Sangh. The author has not attempted to move beyond those already done analyses and to concentrate more on the party's policy of alliances, electoral strategies; political mobilisation and even to throw a cursory look on its expanding social, political and ideological base.

The sole concern of Bruce Graham in the book is - "Why did a nation with a Hindu population of 75% reject a party claiming to be their sole

representative? This electoral and political failure of a political party espousing a "majoritarian" Hindu nationalism is the focus of this study."<sup>14</sup>

Taking a simplistic view; Graham says that the party failed to transcend the limitations of its origin. Its interpretation of Hinduism was both restrictive and exclusive and inspired by the values of Brahminism rather than the devotional values of popular Hinduism. Though, the party had targeted support of 239 million Hindus against 43 million Muslims in post-partition India, the contradictions and its failure to take into account the hostility of the followers of popular Hinduism against such a politics; hampered the growth of militant Hindu party. The "other" Hindus still looked to the Congress for the country's transformation. In other words; the party could not go beyond its Hindi; Hindu; Hindustan vision for india.

Bruce D. Graham feels that if BJS were a moderate Hindu party, then it had a chance of coming to power. In coming to this conclusion, Graham seems to believe that such a party could have been the true inheritor of Patel's legacy, as Patel differed from Nehru on such issues as Pakistan; Indian Muslims and the RSS.

Graham further suggests "it is well within the bounds of possibility that a moderate, more open and more democratic Jana Sangh could have established itself as the governing party in one or two of the large states of northern India and become a significant force in national politics in the 1970s and 1980s"<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Bruce D. Graham - *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics: The Origin and Development of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56.

*"Hindus and others: The question of Identity in India Today"* ed. by Gyanendra Pandey is one such book which reflects on the different facets of communal ideology. This edited book is a collection of eleven papers attempting to deal with the question of identity in India today, of majority of them focus on the Hindutva forces.

Gyanendra Pandey's paper *"Which Of US Are Hindus"* is an excellent exposition of how Hindutva; despite its attempts to create an undifferentiated monolithic Hindu Identity vis a vis the Muslim "other" is in essence the domain of the upper caste, male, north Indian "Hindu".

The contributions by Alok Rai's *"Religious conversions and the crisis of Brahminical Hinduism"* and Pradip Kumar Datta's *"Movement in Ayodhya"* focus on the Hindutva ideology and its obsessive, aggressive and arrogant assumption of "nationalism". Despite a sustained focus on the "Hindutva" ideologues; they have by and large ignored the recipients of that ideology. There is too much focus on the designs of the Hindutva leaders and too little on the motivations of their followers. Any serious inquiry into the question of identity ought to focus on the new forces that have banded together under communal organisations or have been bewitched by the communal appeal.

Tanika Sarkar's research into the role of women in Hindu communal organisations notes how the organisational methods employed by the Rashtra Sevika Samiti - entering the domestic sphere offering a network of support-systems to the women, a sense of belonging-have played a crucial role in extending the reach and depth of Hindu communal ideology in urban north India.



Cristophe Jaffrelot's informative paper on the BJP's growth in Madhya Pradesh points out how RSS activity in the socio-economic sphere also helped the BJP to grow.

This edited book provides a picture of the different strands of the whole Hindutva project. Even though, it lacks coherency and contains contradictory positions taken by some of the contributors; but overall; some of the papers offer a good insight into the whole Hindutva ideology which is an exercise to look away from the traditional way of treating it merely as an irreligious power seeking tactic.

Since the days of the nationalist movement, Hindu nationalism as an alternative mode of "exclusivist nationalism" existed. but it could not emerge as a powerful political force for four decades after independence. The sudden rise of BJP, inheritor of the Hindutva legacy from mid-1980s onwards has initiated or renewed interest in media and academic circle. Two kinds of analyses has followed the phenomenal growth of BJP after it decided to adopt the Ram Janma Bhoomi movement of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and declared Hindutva as its main political and electoral plank. One is a set of writers who has opted to provide a critical analysis of BHP's communal political design, as an antithesis of Nehruvian-nationalist-secularist and modernist framework. Second set of writers consists of those who intend to present their arguments in the way in which the Hindutva forces like them to do. It necessarily leads to a soft and sympathetic analysis of the "exclusivist form of Hindu nationalism" and its overall communal political engineering resulting in an internecine violent inter-community clashes.

The next book under review *"Hindu Nationalists in India - The Rise of BJP"* by Yogendra K. Malik and V.B. Singh falls in the second category of writers.

Malik looks at the rise of the BJP within the ideological context of nationalism since the campaign of the BJP/BJS and its eventual emergence as a decisive force in Indian politics has been on an alternative model of nationalism. For him; ideologies are part of a culture or if borrowed; they become integrated into culture. Malik distinguishes between two "predominant" versions of nationalisms in India - "Indian nationalism" and "Hindu nationalism". The proponents of first according to him were "western-educated Indian elite, who were secular and utilitarian in their approach." The origin of Hindu nationalism; according to him is rooted in the Hindu cultural revival and social reform movements of the 19th century. He does not devote much space to the first till he comes to the discussion of the Nehruvian nationalism and sounds dismissive of contributions of "western-educated and utilitarian", Dadabhai Nauroji and others of his ilk to Indian nationalism. He attempts a clear distinction between them and social reform movements which heregards as a precursor of the contemporary Hindu nationalism.

Malik's understanding of the historical roots of the rise of Hindu nationalisms or of the ideological underpinnings of the nationalist movement is flawed. It may be possible to distinguish between the political agenda of the Indian nationalists and social agenda of the reform movements of the 19th century and between the strategies of the early nationalists and of those such as Aurobindo Ghosh, Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal; but it is inappropriate to characterise any of them as the precursor of Hindu nationalism. Though, they were not detached and isolated from the political context of colonialism; the social reform movements did have an explicit, overt and manifest political agenda. Their discourses, were in no way against any religious community as in the case of the current phase of Hindu "cultural-nationalism".

Malik also traces the origin of the Hindu nationalist platforms like RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. But; his analysis looks one sided due to excessive and uncritical dependence on the BJS/BJP records. Thus; often his analyses suffer from gross contradictions, like he contends that the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS) struggled to enter the mainstream of Indian politics because of its opposition to Nehruvian model of nationalism. He does not critically examine whether the party had an alternative programme to garner popular support at a time; when Nehru's leadership symbolised the building of a modern India. Similarly; he argues without sufficiently analysing the data on state politics that the BJS did not succeed in creating political stability in 1967 because of opportunistic policies of other non-Congress parties. He does not provide data to support the contention that BJS politics was principled whereas other followed opportunistic policies.

Malik points out that the BJS has gained political visibility since 1967 and credibility with JP movement. He has detailed the ideological growth and strategic changes in the BJS/BJP since then. But; he has failed to analyse its growth in the context of emerging crisis in the Indian party system since mid-60s and growing crisis of confidence in the polity since the mid-70s. The Hindu nationalist got their first break in 1967 when it was imperative for the fragmented opposition to come together; undermining ideological considerations to present a joint front against the Congress. its growth in political and electoral terms is very much well grounded in the logic of coalitional politics of post-67 phase. This trend became more visible and vocal in 1977 and 1989 after which it departed from this strategy and since then decided to charter its own independent course in national politics although making alliances with other state-specific political formations in the states.

The chapter on electoral performance by V.B. Singh gives useful data on BJP's electoral performance and also presents a credible analysis of its performance all over the country.

## CHAPTER II

### **UNDERSTANDING THE STATES: BIHAR AND U.P. -- AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL CHARACTER**

After reviewing the available literatures on BJP with an objective to know about party's ideology, leadership: the structures of social support and its strategy of mobilization, it becomes pertinent to understand social, economic and political background of the two areas: Bihar and U.P. taken for the comparative study.

This is a crucial exercise to get informations about these two states in which this dissertation attempts to locate BJP's position in their state politics on a comparative plane.

As the two biggest states in terms of population and with a vast territory Bihar and U.P. possess complex sub-regional settings. Without an understanding of these complex sub-regional economic, social and political varieties with historical rootedness, the analysis of BJP's programmes and policies, strategies of social and political mobilisation and its performance in various state elections will become a futile exercise in the later chapters.

This chapter broadly deals with the overall socio-economic and political character of U.P. and Bihar. It also attempts to study demographic composition of these two states by highlighting regional variations in their social set ups taking in to account the dominant variable of caste.

The variable like literacy level of economic development, agricultural output, industrialization, urban growth, variations in intra-regional

developments and their particular historical legacies greatly help in attempting a comparative analysis of these two states.

The attempt is also being made to undertake a brief historical analysis of the emerging caste - configurations and its dominance pattern and to focus on its regional variances within U.P. and Bihar. The kind of party politics evolved over a period of time in these two states solidly reflect upon caste as a determinant factor. Different district caste groups channelise and satisfy their particular social interests by lending their support to one or another political party. This clearly facilitates the creation of social support base of a political party based on caste solidarity and loyalties which ultimately determine the dynamics of state politics in these two states.

Since 1951; caste census has been discontinued. So far the purpose of this chapter; there is a very conscious reliance on the projections based on certain earlier censuses which were previously included while studying a demographic character of these two states.

Uttar Pradesh, the biggest constituent state in terms of population of the Republic of India, occupies the central sector of the great plain of Northern India. It corresponds closely with the former British province of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh between 1902 to 1935, and thereafter simply as the United Provinces.

The state is geographically divided into five broad regions: Western; Eastern; Central Region; Hill Region and Bundelkhand region.

The Western region is the most developed region of the state occupying the western part of the fertile Ganga plain with well watered resources and good climatic conditions. It has borne both agricultural and industrial

development. It has been benefited most by the Green Revolution and operation Flood-II making it the most developed agricultural region of the state. This region is devoid of minerals and forests. The region is highly developed in terms of infrastructural facilities and industrial development. It is also better off in terms of urbanisation and literacy.<sup>1</sup>

The Eastern region has the lowest per-capita net domestic output. It is industrially backward but richly endowed with fertile alluvial soils. Its economy squarely hinges on agriculture. This region has also 37.37 percent of the total schedule castes population and 9.14 percent of total Schedule tribes population of the state.<sup>2</sup>

The central region is industrially backward excepting Kanpur and Lucknow with barely 2.49% of industrial workers against 4.74% in Eastern U.P. The agriculture is the mainstay of the region which is also devoid of forest reservoirs and mineral resources. The central region has the largest share of the scheduled castes population to total population (26.65%) with large concentrations in Sitapur (30.99%) Unnao (30.07% Hardoi (29.55%) districts.<sup>3</sup>

The hill region is mainly forest and under-developed region which is also known to us as Uttarakhand. Agriculture is the main stay of its economy. The tribal population of state is mainly concentrated in this region.<sup>4</sup>

The Bundelkhand region has the agriculture as the backbone of its economy. But, its productivity is low due to bad soils and meagre

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<sup>1</sup> R.N. Puri - *Encyclopedia of India*, vol. XVI, Uttar Pradesh.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

irrigation facilities. It is equally industrially backward but quite rich in mineral resources.<sup>5</sup>

According to the 1931 census, the brahmans and thakurs alone accounted for 16.4% of the population. Indeed, the brahmans with over 9% of population represented 40% of the entire Brahman caste category in India, making U.P. the area of maximum brahman concentration. Alongwith other high ranking non-cultivating uppercastes groups reached above 20%. Beneath the upper-caste were the elite cultivating castes (jats, bhumihars and tyagis), a small category largely concentrated in Western U.P.; who did not suffer caste-oppression. Below them were the backward caste groups who traditionally worked as cultivators; cowherds; artisans, servants and field labourers and also were subjected to caste disabilities. Although, they accounted for the largest caste category of about 42%, they were also internally divided not only along caste but sub-caste and sub-subcaste lines. Even largest among them, the Yadavs were less numerous than the brahmans, and unevenly distributed across regions with their highest concentration occurring in the eastern districts.

At the bottom of the Hindu social hierarchy were the schedule castes forming 21 percent of the population. Muslims constituted 15% of the total population which stands outside the Hindu order.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Zoya Hasan - *Pattern of Resilience and Change in U.P.*, in Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao, (ed.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989.



**TABLE 2.1**

**PERCENT OF DIFFERENT CASTES TO THE POPULATION IN U.P.**

CASTE	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION
Brahman	9.2%
Thakur	7.2%
Baniya, Kayastha and Khatri	3.6%
Jat, Bhumihar, Tyagi	2.1%
Ahir (Yadav) Kurmi, Lodhi & Gujjar	15.1%
Other Backward castes	26.8%
Schedule castes	21.0%
Muslims	15.0%

*Source: 1931 census; United Provinces of Agra and Awadhi Part 2; Provincial and Imperial Tables, 1933.*

No Single caste is numerically more than a quarter of any district population. Most of the larger castes (brahman; kayasthas; thakurs; khattris; and banias) are widely dispersed and there is no region in U.P. in which one caste pre-dominates.<sup>7</sup>

Historically speaking, the thakur dominance in the eastern region was overwhelming. They had on an average the largest share in the zamindari. In contrast to the eastern region; the rajputs - the thakur's hold was relatively weak in Rohil Khand and the Upper Doab (in the Western region). Here, they were confronted with strong jat chief-tains on the one side and a significant Muslim presence particularly since the middle of the 19th century on the other side. Unlike the thakurs, the jats

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.152.

more frequently cultivated their own lands which encouraged a tradition of peasant proprietorship in the western region of the province.<sup>8</sup>

The differences between the two regions were in considerable measure determined by the physical proximity/distance from the centre of Mughal power. No less important was also the fact that in the north western part of the Mughal empire; the intermediate castes; namely the jats and gujars, settled and consolidated their control over agricultural production in Mughal times. Interestingly; the agrarian uprisings in the western region were led by the Jats and Gujjars, while in the eastern and central U.P., agrarian revolts signified principally the thakurs aspirations for social and political control in their region. The substantial Muslim presence in the west of the province also acted as a check on rajput expansion.<sup>9</sup>

The differences between the two regions were in also reflected at a social level. In the eastern region, members of higher Hindu castes i.e. rajputs, brahmans, and higher Muslim castes Saiyyads, Seikhs and pathans did not cultivate the land themselves. This taboo however, was not rigidly observed in the west on account of the difficulty of obtaining labour. Both brahmans and rajputs were forced to take to the plough. This accounts for the very large number of brahman cultivators in many districts of Western U.P.<sup>10</sup>

Invariably agricultural labourers working in the fields of upper caste zamindars and peasants were from the low castes i.e. chamars and

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<sup>8</sup> Asiya Siddiqui - *Agrarian Change in Northern Indian State, U.P. (1819-1833)*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56.

<sup>10</sup> Imtiaz Ahmed, (ed.) - *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims*, Manohar, Delhi, 1972.

others whose subjection at the hands of the upper castes peasantry continued unabated since medieval period.<sup>11</sup>

During the colonial period, this pattern of land-dominance by upper-castes was maintained through the institutional mechanism of zamindars, one of ferocious mechanisms of rent collections.

Thus towards the end of British rule in India, the rural economic structure of U.P. was marked by extreme inequality in ownership of land and means of production. This was mostly marked in central and eastern U.P. Economic inequalities were reinforced by caste distinctions. There was a strong correlation between land ownership and membership in the upper castes. Traditionally, the dominant land owning castes also enjoyed the highest ritual status.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, in U.P., the twice born castes are a relatively numerous and spread throughout all regions of the state.

In U.P. as a whole thakurs and brahmans owned 57% of the land, while the intermediate castes owned 32 percent and scheduled castes owned a mere 0.09% and Muslim zamindars owned another 11% of the land.<sup>13</sup>

In Awadh and eastern U.P., their domination was most striking where they owned nearly 50% of land in most districts.<sup>14</sup>

After independence, the U.P. Zamindari Abolition law re-ordered the agrarian society and greatly altered the then existing power-equations

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<sup>11</sup> Irfan Habib - *The Peasants in History*, Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, 43rd session., Kurukshetra, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Baljit Singh and Sudhir Mishra - *A Study of Land Reforms in U.P.*, Oxford Book Company, Calcutta, 1964.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp.24-27.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp.29-30. Also see, N.C. Saxena - *Caste and Zamindari Abolition in U.P.*, *Mainstream*, Delhi, 15 June, 1985.

among the different caste-groups. In some areas, particularly in the eastern districts, the great thakur, bania, kayastha and Muslim landlords lost a good deal of land which vastly reduced their economic influence. This greatly effected their hold over political power-structures.

U.P. has been the nerve centre of Indian politics since the late 9th century. Banaras, Allahabad, and Aligarh alongwith other towns; were at the fore-front of anti-colonial struggles in the last three decades of British rule. Several of the most illustrious national leaders were drawn from this province. Similarly, the demand for a separate homeland was made by U.P. Muslims who were at centre of Pakistan movement. Thus, there existed a marked historical legacy of Hindu-Muslim communal polarisations in the state.

After independence the state has become even more crucial in the calculation of the all India political parties. It has a share of one sixth of the members of Parliament which made it a political fulcrum around which much of national politics tuned.

The Congress party ruled from 1952 to 1967. The long standing caste and class nexus of economic and political domination represented by the Congress was challenged only after the mobilization of the middle and backward castes in the wake of the Green Revolution. The process was facilitated by the emergence of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) in 1969 which attempted to build a coalition of prosperous middle castes in the western region and the more numerous backward castes in the less developed eastern region, who were the direct beneficiaries of a moderate state sponsored land reforms programme.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao (ed.) - *Dominance and State Power in Modern Indian: Decline of a Social Order*, vol.1, OUP, Delhi, 1989.

The political ascendancy of these caste groups marked finally in the formation of Lok Dal in 1977 which was a core group of national alliance of Janata Party regime at centre.

The lowest strata of the population scheduled castes did not get direct benefits of zamindari abolitions and remained largely landless labourers. They still work on the landholding of newly emerged backward - intermediate castes, whose numerical strength alone determine their place in the power - relations at social political level in the state.

The Congress dominance and supremacy in the U.P. politics completely came to an end by the end of 80s. Today, the Congress system in U.P. has collapsed. Nowhere is this more apparent than in U.P. where it has suffered a sharp decline in legitimacy and popularity. In 1991, for the first time in four decades, the Congress was voted out of power in U.P. in two successive elections.

“This challenge to the Congress supremacy has come from mainly two quarters. One was the rural coalitions forged by the various Janata formations which combined an advocacy of farmers interests with a call for empowering the non-upper-castes. The other more serious challenge comes from the BJP and its Hindutva platform”<sup>16</sup>. It has in ultimate analysis made substantial inroads into Congress’s upper castes support base basically in rural areas. Now it has virtual control over their support base.

By the end of 90's the previous Janata coalitions of backward castes was replaced by a solid coalition of mainly upper shudra backward - intermediate (especially Yadavs) castes with Muslims in U.P. who now rally behind the Samajwadi Party (SP).

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<sup>16</sup> Zoya Hasan - *Is U.P. Lost to the Congress*, The Hindu, New Delhi, Nov. 4, 1993.

In U.P. a very peculiar political event has taken place unlike of other regions in north India. The schedule caste and other lower; most backward shudras have become an important constituency of Bahujan Samaj Party, an independent dalit political party-platform. 'It was launched in 1984 and entered the electoral fray in 1985. It could not win a single seat in 1985 but made inroads into the traditional Congress vote bank/comprising the schedule caste and other less influential lower shudras. It gained 2% of total votes polluted in 1985. In 1989 it got two seats in Lok Sabha and 13 seats in U.P. assembly"<sup>17</sup>. By now, it has become an important player in whole power play and emerging electoral equations in the state. It formed coalition ministries twice with the support of BJP.

Thus, on the U.P.'s political spectrum at present, the political polarisation has taken around three caste-coalitions. The Samajwadi party is mainly based upon the electoral support base of Yadavs, other backward castes (rich and upwardly mobile) and Muslims. The Bahujan Samaj Party represents the newly emerged political consciousness of more subaltern groups (schedule caste, lower backward castes (numerically weak) in the U.P. The BJP has a solid electoral-political as well as ideological support base among the upper-castes, urban rich business classes, breakaway backward castes (who have refused to rally behind more powerful Yadav led coalition).

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<sup>17</sup> N.K. Chaudhary - *Assembly Elections: 1993*, Shipra, Delhi, 1994.

Bihar is situated in the eastern region of our sub-continent. It is second in our Republic after U.P. in terms of population, majority of which live in the rural areas. It consists of two distinct physical units of roughly equal area: the Gangetic plain in its north and the Chhotanagpur Plateau in its southern part.

It stands 23rd economically in the list of states and Union Territories. It yields 40% of the nation's coal and 20% of iron. 82.2% of its population subsist on agriculture as against the national figure of 68%. Sixty-six percent of this backward state's population live below the poverty line. The state's per capita agricultural income is Rs. 948, the lowest in the country. It has a miserable 2.3% growth in grain production against a population growth of two percent.<sup>18</sup>

With 85% of the over 90 million population being rural, economic crises in Bihar result largely from an acute agricultural stagnation which has colonial origins in the Permanent Settlement, 1793 which legalised, zamindari, one of the most extortionate systems of rent collection. Even though, Bihar was the first to initiate Zamindari abolition in the country, it has the worst record in terms of success.<sup>19</sup>

Bihar faces three distinct patterns of economy in its three clearly defined regions:- The Maithili speaking, a poverty stricken North Bihar is specifically a case of agricultural involutism, with one of the highest land-man ratios in the world. Criss-crossed by the turbulent Kosi, the Kamala Balan, the Bhatahi-Balan, the Gandak; the BurhiGandak; the Mahananda; the Bagmati and the Adhwara group of rivers; this culturally

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<sup>18</sup> *Going for Broke An Economic Crisis in Bihar*, Frontline, Madras, Feb.25, 1994.

<sup>19</sup> Ajit Kumar Jha - *Choices out of Anarchy: Bihar after Five Years of Laloo Prasad Yadav*, Frontline, Madras, March 24, 1995.

rich areas in the Terai region suffers alternately from floods and droughts because of the frequent change of course by these rivers<sup>20</sup>.

The Chotanagpur plateau in South Bihar which is largely tribal, is economically and ecologically one of the most ravaged and exploited regions on the earth. Boasting two of the largest steel plants in Bokaro and Jamshedpur, and two of the country's three coal seams, the Jharkhand and the Barakar, this semi-industrial region in an otherwise largely agrarian Bihar paradoxically has the lowest rate of employment for the sons of soil in the region, causing a bitter tension between them and outsiders. The political penetration by these outsiders is so pervasive that it creates a perverse form of political geography best understood as "internal colonialism"<sup>21</sup>.

It is the Magahi and Bhojpuri - speaking central Bihar that manifests large - scale structural changes. The Green revolution in 80s was largely restricted to this region. This had dual effect on the agrarian political-economy. The twin process of Kulakisation and de-peasantisation produced a class of capitalist farmers and landless agricultural proletariat -- largely dominated by OBCs mainly Yadavs, Kurmis and Koeris Kulaks and among the forward castes by Rajput and Bhumitar landowner. This is not only the most dynamic region of the state (the annual agricultural growth is almost 3.5%) but perhaps the most violent as well. The landless agricultural workers are mainly Dalits especially Musahars and Dushads. Additionally, this region has a tradition of agrarian radicalism. The Bihar Pradesh Kishan Sabha led by Sahajanand Saraswati and based at Bihta was active here during colonial period. In

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.41.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. pp.41-42.



the 1980s, the CPI initiated the land-grab movement in this region and since the 1980s various other Marxist-Leninist groups have been active in the districts of this region.<sup>22</sup>

In its social set up twice born upper castes constitute 11.26% of total population of which Brahmans constitute 4.7%, Bhumihar - 2.9%, Rajputs - 4.2%, Kayasthas - 1.2% and Bania - 0.6%. The upper shudras ahir (Yadav) constitute 11.0% of total population, Kurmis - 3.6% and Koeris - 4.1%. The lower shudras together constitute more than 32% of total population. The schedule tribe population is 9.1% and Muslims constitute 12.5% of total population<sup>23</sup>.

There is also a regional variation within the state in the concentration of these caste-groups in Bihar. Brahmins account for less than five percent of the total population of Bihar but their numbers were concentrated in the central Gangetic plain in northern part of the state. Indeed, 20% of brahmans in Bihar were enumerated from what has become Darbangha district by the 1930s. Historically, maithili Brahmans owned the largest proportion of land in the Darbangha region, although, they did not take up personal cultivation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp.41-42.

<sup>23</sup> Harry W. Blair, *Voting Caste, Community and Society: Explorations in Aggregate Data Analysis in India and Bangladesh*, 1979.

<sup>24</sup> Nirmal Sengupta and Arvind N.Das, *Agrarian Change, Agrarian Tension, Peasant Movement and Organisation in Bihar*, Manohar, Delhi, 1984.

The ritual ranking of twice born castegroups constructed according to their generally accepted social precedence in 1970s (using 1931 census data) probably has not altered since Mughal times<sup>25</sup>.

**TABLE 2.2**

**PERCENT OF DIFFERENT CASTES TO THE POPULATION IN BIHAR**

Category	Category Group	Percentage of Total Population
Twice Born Castes	Brahman	4.7%
	Bhumihar	2.9%
	Rajput	4.2%
	Kayastha	1.2%
	Bania	0.6
Upper Shudras	Ahir (Yadav)	11.0%
	Kurmi	3.6%
	Koeri	4.1%
Lower Shudras	Barhai	1%
	Dhanuk	1.8%
	Kahar	1.7%
	Kandu	1.6%
	Kumhar	1.3%
	Lohar	1.3%
	Mollah	1.5%
	Nai	1.4%
	Tatwa	1.6%
	Teli	2.0%
	Schedule Castes	16.0%
	Schedule Tribes	9.1%

Source: Harry W. Blair, 1979

<sup>25</sup> Harry W. Blair, *Op. Cit.*, 1979, p.5.

In South Bihar, the major landowners were Babhans or Bhumihars, a community whose greatest numbers were concentrated in the old Magadhan empire region what is known as Magadh division. An important issue for the bhumihars and for the Rajputs, also well to do landholders was the claim of the Bhumihars to higher ritual status of Brahman or Bhumihar brahmans. They claimed to be brahmans who had converted to Buddhism but returned to Hinduism later than the brahmans in surrounding areas. Their lands were said to have been seized from old Buddhist monasteries. Like Rajputs; they engaged local Brahmans to perform religious rituals. The rajputs claimed rank higher than their as Kshatriyas descended from Aryan soldiers.<sup>26</sup>

The Bhojpur speaking areas in western Bihar have bhumihars and rajputs as dominant landholders and principal zamindars.

Although the brahmans, bhumihars and rajputs had concentrated strength in different areas (the north, south and west respectively and all of them were traditional rivals) each of the castes drew legitimacy for their dominant position from twice-born status.

The relationship between caste and class was rigidified to some extent by the introduction of zamindari landrights under the British rule. Virtually all great landlords among Hindus were brahmans, bhumihars and rajputs although not all households among the upper castes held large estates. The majority of high castes households (including Kayasthas) as well as upper status Muslims, were small landlords and rich peasants; a group which in north Bihar comprised about 10% of the population.

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<sup>26</sup> Nirmal Sengupta and Arvind N.Das - *Op. Cit.*, 1984, p.63.

The most numerous members of the middle peasants were the Ahirs (Yadavs) the largest caste-groups in all districts of Bihar (except Chhotanagpur) followed by the traditional cultivating castes of Kurmis and Koeris. They also worked as agricultural labourers where holdings were too small to provide subsistence. More frequently, untouchable castes such as chamars musahars, and dusadhs performed as field labourers for which they were paid wages in kind.<sup>27</sup>

These castes were distributed more or less evenly throughout the state except for parts of Gaya and Palamu, where they accounted for nearly one third of the population.

The Muslim population was scattered throughout the rural areas, with concentration in South Bihar and Chhotanagpur below 10% and in north Bihar between 10-15% except in the districts of Purnea, Katihar, Araria where they constituted one third of the population.

Thus for centuries, Bihar represented the ideal type and the extreme case of a multi-stranded dominance by upper castes as a consequence of the convergence of twice-born ritual status, relatively large numbers, concentration of land rights, and legitimation of the social hierarchy by Brahmanical ideology.

Analytically three distinct aspects of the transformation of Bihar's politics can be separated. During the colonial rule, state power was used to rigidify and reinforce the local dominance of upper caste landlords or

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.66.

Zamindars and to suppress peasant revolts against them which erupted from the mid 19th century.<sup>28</sup>

Until independence, in addition, the Indian National Congress played a complementary political role in diffusing caste and class polarisations over economic and social issues. After independence, under the impact of universal suffrage the Bihar Congress was itself constrained to pursue a reformist policy on several issues including Zamindari Abolition. These policies had the unintended consequences of weakening the social prestige, economic position and political strength of the upper castes relative to that of the upper shudras (Yadavs, Kurmis and Koeris)<sup>29</sup>. After independence the Congress Party in Bihar was dominated by the trinity of Brahmins, Bhumihars, and Rajputs. Occasionally challenged by Kayasthas backward castes such as Yadavs only entered as Junior allies. It was only after the Congress (I) defeat in 1967 that B.P. Mandal a backward caste leader became Chief Minister. Ironically, Bhola Paswan Shastri, who was from schedule caste; came to power with the support of Binodanand Jha and thus began the forward - Schedule caste alliance in the Congress which continued till mid 80s<sup>30</sup>.

In this respect, the decade from 1967 was a watershed in Bihar politics. The Congress deback which began during the fourth general and assembly elections ended in the party's total decay by 1977. Bihar experienced nine coalition ministries and three spells of President's rule

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<sup>28</sup> Francine Frankel, *Op. Cit.* , 1989, pp.81-85

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.86-87.

<sup>30</sup> Ajit Kumar Jha - *Choices out of Anarchy: Bihar, After Five Year's of Laloo Prasad Yadav's Rule*, Frontline, Madras, March 24, 1995.

in a matter of four years between 1967-71. This phenomena was based primarily on the instrumental use of caste.<sup>31</sup>

Though Karpoori Thakur was a Hajjam (barber) by caste , he was primarily a socialist leader with a long term agenda. Not only had the minority vote banks of Muslims and Schedule caste, moved away from the Congress towards Janata Party which was then riding the JP movement, but the institutionalisation of new voting patterns began with Karpoori Thakur's attempt at long-term changes. Chief among them being the issue of job quotas for OBCs.<sup>32</sup>

This decade can be characterised as a period of electoral realignments. The Janata Party coalitions, were fundamentally different from those of the Congress Party and even the tenuous non-Congress ministries that ruled previously. The 1980's witnessed the return of the Congress with a much reduced mandate. Political anarchy manifested itself in rampant factionalism, with frequent changes of Chief Ministers and caste-based (mainly upper castes) factional leaders ruled more by executive fiats and by institutionalising corruption.<sup>33</sup>

The final blow came by the end of 80s with instable Congress regimes. Janata Dal, a reincarnation of previous Janata coalition came to dominate the state political scene and still under command. The powerful Yadavas; other numerous backward castes, Muslims and schedule caste are its solid social support base, more concretized in post-mandal polarisations.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, pp.42-45

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp.42-43.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp.42-43

At a time, in mid 1980s, the structures of Bihar politics reflected the scene which was not very different from that of the 1930s when democratic politics first began soon after the bifurcation of the state from the Bengal Presidency.

Both then and now, the main contenders are internally divided; Congress Party on the one hand and the sectarian socialist groups on the other. The main difference is that while the leadership of the state until 1967 uninterruptedly resided with the conservative Congress party now it rests firmly with the largest re-incarnation of the socialists, the Janata Dal.

Whether caste in Bihar has replaced all other institutions of civil society such as political parties and Kisan Sabhas still remains a subject for serious research. Although, Bihar has a long tradition of active class based politics but its effects on the state political scene are marginal.

Grass roots peasant politics pursued by Sahajanand Sarsati of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Sabha was mostly outside the pale of mainstream nationalist politics. Radical peasant empowerment led by various Marxist Leninist groups, deeply divided among themselves still remain marginal.

Communal politics practiced by the Sangh Parivar, led by BJP in the political arena remained on the sidelines. Its communitarian ideology failed to make any substantial forays into the highly caste based political polarisations in Bihar. Though its predecessor Jana Singh played a crucial part in Bihar movement under J.P during mid 1970's, it primarily functioned as an ally of a broader Janata coalition. In post-mandal scenario, it severed its alliance with the Janata coalition and got completely marginalised. Even in the mid-80s, Hindutva upsurge failed to boost its image in the state.

But in 1996 general elections, it has recovered substantial grounds in Bihar. It shared almost equal seats with Janata Dal, its main rival in Bihar, in every region and commanded a total control over the tribal belt in Jharkhand region. This happened when it entered into the political alliance with the regional specific caste based political parties with a solid support base of upper castes in wake of a complete marginalisation of Congress party in state politics.

### **A Comparative Analysis**

While attempting a comparative study of Bihar and U.P. and after analysing these trends spread over a period of time, we come across various similar as well as dissimilar emergent trends in these two states.

It is very much clear that these two states have their own distinct heterogeneous sub regional entities.

These differ in their economic activities, nature of social settings, distinct caste configurations, different modes of power-relations in social and political terms which ultimately determine sub-regional spread of district ideologies political contestation.

There is a similar historical pattern of the emergence of the dominance of upper caste groups in social, political and economic relations in these two states. But, over a period of time, particularly after independence, this dominance started crumbling. There is a similar pattern in the change in the agrarian relations and emergence of backward-intermediate castes who are today the main determinant factor in political relation of these states.

The powerful upper Shudra castes (like Yadavs, Kurmir and Koeris) have been in forefront in challenging the dominance of upper castes.



Unlike U.P., Bihar has not witnessed the emergence of schedule caste (Lower Shudras) representing their own political platform as well ideology. In case of U.P., Lower shudras (dalits) have carved a place for their own independent political assertion in state politics.

In U.P. BJP has prominent political presence, to some extent, a major determining factor in state politics. Its Hindutva issue and Ayodhya mobilisation swept the state at a particular point of time. But, in Bihar it could not make any political gain.

## CHAPTER III

### **BJP IN THE STATE POLITICS OF U.P. AND BIHAR: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS (PRE 1986-PHASE)**

After getting a broad picture of U.P. and Bihar in terms of its socio-economic and demographic set-up and their regional variations within these states, it becomes important at this stage to introduce the BJP in state's political context. The aim is to study the BJP's overall position in these state's party system by locating its linkage with its predecessor party organisation i.e. Bharatiya Jana Sangh in pre-1986 phase.

There is also a focus on its policy-orientations, mobilisation strategies and its social support bases during pre-1986 phase (dealt with in this chapter). The analysis at this level will ultimately facilitate a coherent picture of BJP's performance in the states elections in these two states from 1986 onwards upto 1996.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh came closest to being a Hindu party when it was formed in 1951; as it was committed to Bharatiya Sanskriti which for many of its members and supporters mean Hindu nationalism. A mere cursory reading of the manifestoes released by the party during the elections reveal that the party took stands almost on all the issues reflecting an overt Hindu nationalist overtone in contrast to Congress and the Socialists which envisaged their programmes and policies not based on sectional or communal interests.

The 1957 manifesto released by the BJP reads, "for the preservation of national unity, it will create a feeling of equality and oneness in Hindus and nationalise

all non-Hindus by inculcating in them the idea of Bharatiya culture". Subsequent manifestoes of the party asserted these policies<sup>1</sup>.

The Jana Sangh although eschewed an anti-Muslim position openly, but took positions that were loosely identified with a Hindu perspective viz, support for cow protection, promotion of Ayurvedic or traditional medicines, advocacy of Hindi as the country's official language and opposition to the use of Urdu language, considered to be the language of Indian Muslims.

The Jana Sangh support for Hindi and its opposition to the use of Urdu attracted newly educated Hindus to the party who saw English and Urdu as the language of social classes competing for positions in governmental bureaucracy.

In its economic outlook; its policy orientations showed a drift towards liberal industrial policy and lesser state control. The economic policies and programmes espoused by it showed a clear inclination to champion the cause of big and small entrepreneurial classes<sup>2</sup>. The target was to channelise the interests of upwardly mobile trading classes based in big and small townships, who also tended to be most conservative in their life-style and outlook.

While dealing with Bihar and U.P. both being primarily agrarian states, it becomes important to focus on BJS's agrarian policies and programmes.

An examination of the agrarian policy of BJS in the 1950s and 60s shows that it tried to steer a middle course between conservatism and radicalism. This is particularly seen in its attitude towards land-reforms. While it supported land

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<sup>1</sup> Text of 1957 Manifesto of Bharatiya Jana Sangh is contained in *Organiser*, February 25, 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Party Documents, vol.2, *Resolutions on Economic Affairs*, New Delhi, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1973.

reforms, it wanted to avoid displeasing the landlords. The party held, "if it is found essential in the interests of the economy of the country the party would abolish Jagirdari and Zamindari with compensation and distribute the land to the tillers. Enough land would however be left with them (Zamindars) as would settle down as landowning farmers."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the party in the 1950s wanted the Zamindars to remain ownership rights, while guaranteeing security of tenure and an increase share of the produce to the tenant. In its 1957 manifesto the party while asking for land reforms also asked for rehabilitation of the Zamindars.<sup>4</sup>

The party did not oppose ceiling on agricultural land and pointed out that large tracts would not become available for redistribution for the landless. It laid greater stress on security of tenure, fair rents, improvement in farming techniques and better marketing facilities.<sup>5</sup>

It emphasised on building up the productive capacity of the economy before adopting measures aimed at distributive justice.

In the 1960s, its economic policies were very similar to those of the Swatantra Party. It opposed Nehru's proposal for government co-operative farming and collectivisation and saw it as an attempt to end "peasant proprietorship and family farming; which was the cause of widespread disturbances in rural India."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1952 Manifesto of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, in Craig Baxter - *A Biography of an Indian Political Party*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1969.

<sup>4</sup> 1957 Manifesto, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, *Organiser*, 25 Feb. 1957.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> M.A. Jhangiani, *Jana Sangh and Swatantra: A Profile of Rightist Parties in India*, Bombay, 1967.

Hence the party appealed largely to the feudal landed gentry.

From the 1967 onwards, it has attempted to mobilise the emerging rich middle - peasant castes also and thus attempted to counter the rise of highly mobile intermediate castes on the political scene in both U.P. and Bihar. It attempted to broaden its rural base also. It promised cheaper inputs, remission of land-revenue and irrigation rates, remunerative prices; abolition of levy and monopoly purchase; cheap credit etc.<sup>7</sup>

It is now very clear that BJS never showed much interest in the land reforms. The party had also never shown much interest in the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers or attempted to mobilise them. Hence, it remained a conservative party of the big landowners and to a lesser extent the emerging rich peasants.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was the only party in north India which did not develop out of the Congress. Its U.P. unit was important because it was started in 1951 itself and was able to establish itself in a major opposition party by the early 1960s. In its organisation, nature and outlook it was very different from all other parties in U.P.<sup>8</sup>

U.P. has also been the focal point of the activities of BJS's political ancestor (Hindu Mahasabha) and the ideological and organisational ancestor (the RSS). This is important because much of its organisational impetus came from RSS, a distinctively militant Hindu organisation concerned with the regeneration of India as a Hindu nation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ranjit Lal, *Election Manifestoes: A Comparative Study* in R.S. Rajput (ed.) *Dynamics of Democratic Politics in India: A Study of the 1984 and 85 Loksabha Elections*, Deep & Deep Publications, Delhi, 1986, pp.11-41.

<sup>8</sup> Craig Baxter, *Op. Cit.*, 1969, p.34.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

The BJS's entrance into electoral politics suggested that its positions then lacked popular support.

The electoral presence of BJS in the first general elections in 1952 was negligible. In U.P.'s elections for parliamentary seats, it contested 41 seats, lost deposits in 235 seats and failed to capture a single seat. Its percentage of votes to total votes was only 7.29 percent. In assembly elections, it contested 210 seats, lost deposits in 153 and secured only 2 seats with only 6.44 percent of votes polled in the election.<sup>10</sup>

After that, there was a progressive improvement in its performance in both assembly and parliamentary elections from 1957 onwards. U.P. became the leading state in terms of Jana Sangh representation.

In 1957 U.P.'s parliamentary elections, it contested 61 seats, lost deposits 30 and won 2 seats with 14.79 percent of total votes polled. In this election, BJS opened its account and increased its share by fifty percent.<sup>11</sup>

In 1957 assembly elections, the party undoubtedly strengthened itself in Uttar Pradesh. In this election; it contested 255 seats, lost deposits in 133, won 17 seats with 9.77 percent of total votes polled.<sup>12</sup>

In 1962 assembly elections in U.P., BJS achieved the status of official opposition, i.e. the largest opposition party with at least ten percent of seats in U.P., a goal set by its leadership for 1962 assembly elections. It captured 49 seats and 16.46 percent of total votes cast. The party made significant gains in almost every district of the state. The gains were largely in the rural areas of

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<sup>10</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *State Elections in India: Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections (1952-1985)*, vol.4, The North, Part II, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.32

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.33

the state where the Jana Sangh made substantial efforts in the inter-election period to popularise the party's programmes, to enrol workers and to enlist the support of some of the local Zamindars.

In 1957, the basic policy of the Jana Sangh was declared by Deendayal Upadhyaya to be opposed to national alliances with any party. He said that the party would agree to total adjustments with all parties except the communists and the communal parties e.g. Akali Dal and Muslim League. Praja Socialist Party was also included in the group with whom adjustment would be made<sup>13</sup>. This position remained intact in 1962 elections. BJS, Praja Socialist Party and Swatantra Party joined themselves in the elections which was billed as one of the titanic struggles of the election.

It had alliance with other two Hindu parties, the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Hindu Mahasabha. While Mahasabha and Parishad still retained pocket of influence and were able, here and there to attract locally important persons to grace the party tickets, the two parties were even weaker collectively than they had been in 1957. In 1962 elections, the BJS and Swatantra Party alliance benefited to their mutual interest in the northern Terai districts of U.P.

In 1962 assembly elections, the BJS also overcame its alleged urban bias. Often BJS has been pictured as a party which draws its support from urban areas and is correspondingly quite weak in the rural sections.

In rural areas in 1957 assembly elections, the BJS contested 201 of the 385 seats, winning 15 and polled 8.73% of total votes cast. In 1962, the rural record was 334 contested, 45 won and 15.58 percentage of votes polled.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Dindayal Upadhyay, *The Jan Sangh and the General Election* in S.L. Poplai (ed.) *1962 General Elections in India*, Bombay, 1962. Also see, Surinder Suri, *1962 Elections: A Political Analysis*, Sudha Publications, New Delhi, 1962.

<sup>14</sup> Craig Baxter, *Op.Cit*, 1969, p.81.

In urban areas, in 1957 assembly elections, the BJS contested 34 of the seats, winning two and polled 16.69 percent of votes polled. Its record in 1962 was 43 seats contested, won 4 including one of those won in 1957 with 22.69% of total votes cast.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, while there was an appreciable increase in the share of votes received by the BJS in the urban areas - an increase of 36 percent - and it was in the rural areas that party made its greatest inroads -- an increase of 78%. It, however, did attract a share of the landed gentry and the increase in the rural vote may be attributed to landlord's influence as well as to the decline in Congress popularity.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh retained its status as "the largest party after the Congress in U.P. as it won 98 seats in 425 member assembly for which it contested 401 seats and received 21.67% of votes polled in the 1967 assembly elections.<sup>16</sup>

The areas in which the BJS attracted votes were much more widely dispersed than in 1962 elections. The party increased its share of votes in both urban and rural sectors. The party's share of the rural vote increased by 34% while that in urban constituencies increased by 21%. The BJS appeared to be following its earlier pattern of strength in urban areas with subsequently reaching out into other areas.

After 1967 assembly elections, BJS for the first time in U.P. experienced the ministerial participation in the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal ministry led by Charan

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.83.

<sup>16</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Op. Cit.*, 1988, p.33.



Sangh. It contributed four cabinet ministers in 16 member ministry and three of the twelve deputy ministers.<sup>17</sup>

Looking at the results of first three state elections, the BJS seemed to be a fast growing party. It doubled its strength in very election between 1952 and 1967. By 1967, it looked as if U.P. was poised towards a two party system: Congress and the BJS.<sup>18</sup>

Studies in the 1960s show that most of the BJS MLA came from the upper elite castes and were largely urban based though many came from a Zamindari background. It definitely did not represent the rural poor or the lower castes. Many studies show that the Congress represented in the 1960s the upper and lower castes specially in the rural areas while the Jana Sangh represented the upper and the middle castes.<sup>19</sup>

The BJS drew between 20 percent to 50 percent of its legislative assembly membership in 1952, 1957 and 1962 from former medium and large Zamindars and talukdars. More than 50 percent of its legislative assembly and party committee members were drawn from these elite castes.<sup>20</sup>

By 1967 the BJP underwent a sharp change. The number of backward and schedule castes MLAs, increased showing an expansion of the mass-base. The party had some attraction for the Bania or trading community which was not represented in the other parties. In fact, Paul R. Brass argued that the

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<sup>17</sup> Myron Weiner and John O. Field (ed.) *Studies in Electoral Politics in the Indian State*, 1977. Also see, Samuel J. Eldersveld, *The 1967 Indian Election and Pattern of Party Regularity and Defection*, Asian Survey, X.no.11, Nov. 1970, Berkeley, California.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p.244.

<sup>19</sup> Angela Burger, *Opposition in a Dominant Party System: A Study of the Jana Sangh, the Praja Socialist Party and the Socialist Party in U.P.*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1969.

<sup>20</sup> Saraswati Srivastava, *U.P.: The Politics of Neglected Development* in Iqbal Narain (ed.) *State Politics in India*, Meenakshi Publications, Merrut, 1976.

leadership and main electoral support of the party in 1960s came largely from merchants, shopkeepers and businessmen in towns and big land-lords in the rural areas.<sup>21</sup>

By the end of the 1960s Srivastava's study shows that the leadership of the party had slipped into the hands of the middle class agriculturists urban professionals and whole time workers of the party.<sup>22</sup>

Another interesting observation with the BJS which is significant in its electoral context is that it exploited the Hindu-Muslim schism in the state.

UP being the centre of Muslim League mobilisations in pre-independence days, witnessed very sharp polarisations between Hindus and Muslims. This rift had its reflections in the Jana Sangh ideological inclinations thus providing it a space to channelise the Hindu conservatives for its own political and electoral purposes.

The only state which combined a fairly wide spread activity on the part of Jana Sangh and a relatively high percentage of Muslims is Uttar Pradesh.

It has been observed that the Jana Sangh polled more strongly in areas which have a high concentration of Muslims in which it was presumed communal tensions would be stronger than in those where the number of Muslims small. It seemed clear that communal issues contributed to support from Hindus to Jana Sangh.

### TABLE 3.1

#### JANA SANGH'S VOTE AND MUSLIM POPULATION IN UTTAR PRADESH IN 1962 AND 1967 ELECTIONS

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Brass, *Uttar Pradesh* in Myron Weiner (ed.) *State Politics in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968.

<sup>22</sup> Saraswati Srivastava, *Op. Cit.*, 1976, p.176.

	Districts	Muslims Percentage of population	Jana Sangh's vote in percentage	
			in 1962	1967
	Rampur	45.01	20.25	18.04
	Moradabad	37.25	20.59	19.07
	Bijnor	36.54	25.97	21.35
	Saharanpur	31.07	12.79	11.90
	Bareilly	29.87	16.93	34.74
	Merrut	20.97	8.58	11.90
	Bahraich	25.57	6.43	44.50
	Muzzafarnagar	27.95	8.24	6.64

Sources: Muslims percentage from census of India paper No.1 of 1963, 1961 census, "Religion" published by Government of India Press, New Delhi 1963. Jana Sangh's percentage of votes from Election Commission reports after elections.

In U.P. the BJS like the Congress drew its main support from the elite castes of Brahmans, Rajputs and Kayasthas and from the Vaishya castes in the towns. The Jana Sangh's "appeal had been to those who held authority in the old social order - like the Rajput warrior castes, the former talukdar-landlord classes and to the middle propertied strata particularly the merchants and in some areas, the middle peasantry and the newly urbanised lower middle classes. The Jana Sangh had little influence upon the lower social strata, either in the towns or in the countryside.<sup>23</sup>

Although the BJS made strong over-tunes to the former landlord classes, its appeal was directed principally to peasants and farmers holding between five to 30 acres of land. The party accused the Congress of following policies that would not "create a social order in the countryside based on peasant proprietorship but would rather move rural society toward collectivisation. Although BJS expressed its support for redistribution of large landholdings, it

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<sup>23</sup> S.S. Bhandari, Bharatiya Jana Sangh in V. Grover (ed.), *Political System in India: Party System and Political Parties*, Vol.5, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1989.

proposed that such redistribution should take place by direct sale on the part of landowners rather than through the state bureaucracy.<sup>24</sup>

The big Hindu landlords in U.P. has been generally a person holding conservative religious and social views and BJS attempted to gain their electoral support.<sup>25</sup>

The regional support base of the party is important and has also shown shifts though Awadh remained for long the principal and enduring stronghold of the party.

Like other non-Congress parties in U.P. it developed a strong regional support base in this case the central plains districts of Awadh - once the homeland of the great landlords of U.P. known as talukdars. For some time the party drew heavily upon the support and resources of several of the talukdars families, but eventually it succeeded in establishing itself more broadly in this region as the principal voice for the leading proprietary communities including many from among the backward cultivating castes of Ahirs (Yadav) and Kurmis. In Awadh region as well as other regions the Congress support base among the important land controlling communities had been eroded as early as the 1960s.<sup>26</sup>

A second region which was important upto 1967 was Rohilkhand, followed by a third of lesser importance, Bundelkhand and Eastern districts. The Jana Sangh therefore had its principal strength in the plains districts north of the Ganges, but consistently only in Awadh.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Saraswati Srivastava, *Op. Cit.*, 1976, p.201.

<sup>25</sup> Harold A. Gould, *Religion and Politics in a U.P. Constituency* in Danal E. Smith (ed.) *South Asian Politics and Religion*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966.

<sup>26</sup> Paul R. Brass, *Op. Cit.*, 1968, p.168.

<sup>27</sup> Paul R. Brass, *Caste, Faction and Party in Indian Politics*, (Vol.II) *Election Studies*, Chanakya Publications, New Delhi, 1985, pp.65-162.

This regional pattern of support is partly due to its rural class base. Upto 1969, in the rural areas the BJS could be described as a party of the leading proprietary groups.

Berger's study of Pratapgarh in 1962 showed that the strength of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh was based on a "Raja network, "consisting of the Raja and his dependants and thakurs of the districts".<sup>28</sup>

But, Paul Brass has quite rightly suggested that in areas such as Pratpgarh the base of the party was broader. Its support was not confined to areas where the large land-owners were pre-dominant but spread across the entire spectrum of landholding categories of 2.5 acres and above and particularly from 5 acres and above. With the marginal landowners and agricultural labourers in all elections between 1952-69, the correlation was negative.<sup>29</sup>

The BJS due to this brand base in Awadh was able to hold its own first against Congress, then the Swantantra party and the BKD. The BJS was able to articulate the interest of both the leading peasant proprietor and big landlords. This pattern of support it was able to continue right upto 1977 when the party merged with the Janata Party. However, its base shrank after 1977.

After the 1967 elections, the BJS however declined and was relegated to third place in U.P. party system as will be evident from the 1969 and 1974 elections results. The two other factors contributed in its decline after 1967.

Firstly, the formation of BKD certainly affected it. This was mainly based on the support base of the middle caste peasantry in the U.P. The BJS's ambition to expand its support base among these social groups got completely marginalised by the emergence of BKD and later on BLD and different other Janata Coalitions after 70s onwards. However, it remained confined to

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<sup>28</sup> Angela Burger, *Op.Cit.*, 1969, pp.117-129.

<sup>29</sup> Paul R. Brass, *Op. Cit.*, 1985, pp.65-162.

support-base of upper caste-elite groups and small business communities in towns viz. banias and khatris.

Secondly, the BJS failed to evolve into a stable political force and institutionalise its leadership.

There is another phenomena of the assertion of Congress Party after the debacles of 1967 assembly election which explains the decline in BJS's performance in state elections. The ministerial experience of BJS in the Charan Singh government lasted for 2 years. Various political interest groups combined in an effort to form the government could not remain intact and defections based on sectional interests led to the fall of government itself<sup>30</sup>

This period marked the trends of revival in the Congress organisation after Mrs. Indira Gandhi put herself firmly in the saddles in the Congress Party. Defection in its state units were dealt with firm hand and a semblance of leadership was restored. A vigorous attempt was made by the Congress Party to recover the loosing grounds among its traditional vote-banks by means of giving greater representation to Muslims, backwards and Harijan in the State unit's leadership structures and espousal of radical economic programmes beneficial to the lower strata of the population.<sup>31</sup>

This Congress's assertiveness in the U.P.'s political space marginalised the chances of other political parties including BJS to maintain their positions intact in state political and electoral context. This was a continued trend uptill 1977.

In 1969 elections, Congress Party won 214 seats out of 424 seats it contested and secured 33.7% of votes polled. But still, BJS managed to secure the second position in the state assembly. Out of 397 seats it contested it captured

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp.160-161.

<sup>31</sup> Myron Weiner and Ashutosh Varshney (ed.) *The Indian Paradox: Essays in Indian Politics*. Sage Publications, Delhi, 1989.

49 seats and polled 17.9 percent of total votes cast. Although this time, its performance marked a downslide in its share of seats as well as votes polled.<sup>32</sup>

This slump in BJS's electoral graph was also observed in the 1974 assembly elections. This time also, Congress showed continuance in its success and secured 215 seats out of 403 seats contested and 32.3% of total votes polled. BJS contested 401 seats and secured 61 seats and 17.1% of total votes polled, which indicated a slight improvement in its seat share by 12 seats compared to 1969 assembly elections.<sup>33</sup>

The 1977 elections were held in the backdrop of anti-emergency agitations. The national emergency was imposed in 1975 by Indira Gandhi regime which put restrictions on political activities, press freedom, criticism of government by opposition parties etc.

The north Indian region was worst affected by the emergency measures. Then it was the centre of anti-Congressism under the leadership of likes of Jayaprakash Narayan.

A large number of political activists belong to opposition political groups were put behind the bars without trial. The political victimisation of all sorts was perpetrated on a wide scale in this region. U.P. being a crucial state in this region from political point of view, was worst hit.

The stringent emergency measures of Indira Gandhi's regime led to a widespread resentment among the masses. This resulted in wide-spread agitations which over a period of time took political colour. The anti-Congress wave plunged whole of India. This was at its peak in U.P.

After the end of emergency in 1977 and restoration of normal democratic procedures, elections were announced. In national politics, a powerful

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<sup>32</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Op.Cit*, 1988, p.33.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

combination of four opposition parties under the rubric of Janata Party emerged to oppose the Congress Party in the elections.

Janata Party in U.P. was a coalition formed principally from the former Bhartiya Kranti Dal (BKD), Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP), Congress (O) and Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Jana Sangh did not stand as a separate political party in 1977 because it had been absorbed into the Janata Party. The BJS was an important ally in this combination and even played a crucial role in its formation. Although, it was submerged into Janata Party, but in elections the candidates of the party pulled a sizeable vote.<sup>34</sup>

The post-emergency political groupings among principal opposition parties to fight the Congress dominance provided the BJS leadership a space for tactful alignment to improve its own political image as well as electoral graph.

In 1977 assembly elections in U.P. the Congress Party expectedly received the heaviest blow in its political history and was reduced to rubble. It secured only 47 seats and polled 31.9% of votes cast. The Janata Party in which Jana Sangh was an important ally emerged as the largest party with 352 seats out of 422 seats contested with 47.8% of votes polled.<sup>35</sup>

The tremendous electoral victory of Janata Party was attributed to the anti-Congress wave in the aftermath of emergency in India. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh participated in the Janata coalition government after its tremendous victory in the assembly elections.

The Janata experiment could not remain intact and soon collapsed like a pack of cards due to infighting and squabbles among its constituents. The final blow came when some Janata constituents especially socialists raised the issue of dual membership of the Jana Sangh leaders and party activists.

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<sup>34</sup> Myron Weiner and John O. Field (ed.) *Electoral Politics in the Indian State (1974-77)*, 1979.

<sup>35</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Op.Cit* , 1988, p.34.



Much of the organisational strength of the Jana Sangh is derived from its close affiliation with the RSS. This organisation is more explicitly militant and Hindu than the Jana Sangh. As the Jana Sangh broadened its electoral base and began to compete with other groups within the Janata Party - especially the Lok Dal, the party of middle-castes peasantry, its opponents within the Janata Party demanded that the Jana Sangh break its ties with the RSS. But the Jana Sangh leaders refused, recognising that without the RSS ties they would be organisationally weakened.

Finally, BJS broke away with the Janata Party and rechristened itself as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). After the fall of Janata government at the centre and arrival in 1980 of Indira Gandhi to power, the President rule was imposed in U.P. dismissing the state government.

Subsequently, the assembly elections were held in 1980. This time the BJP did not enter into any alliance with other political parties in the state elections. It stood alone. The 1980 assembly elections witnessed the comeback of the Congress (I) with total 309 seats and 33.7% of votes polled. BJP's performance in the election was at its lowest ebb. It contested 400 seats, lost deposits in 283 and managed to win only 11 seats with 10.8% of total votes polled. This performance virtually reverted back its position in state politics as it was in 1957.<sup>36</sup>

The 1985 assembly elections were held in post Indira Gandhi -- assassination phase in the wake of gripping Punjab crisis. This generated a massive sympathy wave in favour of the Congress (I) and its young leader, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, son and successor of Mrs. Gandhi. Congress (I) captured 269 seats and was polled 39.3% total votes.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.34.

<sup>37</sup> Iqbal Narain, *Indian in 1985 Triumph of Democracy*, Asian Survey, Vol. 26, no.2., Feb. 1986, pp.255-87.

BJP contested in 347 segments lost deposits in 249 segments and won only 16 seats with 9.9% of total votes polled<sup>38</sup>. Besides sympathy wave in the favour of Congress, this low performance of BJP was also attributed to the role of RSS, its ideological and organisational ancestor, which publicly announced to support the Congress (I) in the election to save the country from the mounting separatist pressures in Pubjab and North-East.

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<sup>38</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Op. Cit.*, 1988, p.34.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh appeared on the Bihar's scene just before the first general election to fill up the void created by the disappearance of Hindu Mahasabha for all practical purpose.

Though, the RSS had been operating there for quite some time, it was confined only to some urban areas like Patna, Bhagalpur, Siwan, Gaya and so on and had the support of only a section of Bania shopkeepers and Marwai traders.

The communal riots in Calcutta in 1946 provided an opportunity to the RSS to work on the feelings of the Bihari Hindus returning from Bengal and it did succeed in fomenting communal riots in some areas of South Bihar.

Till 1947 the RSS remained a force of no significance. It was feeble and had no appeal to Bihari Hindu Society. Hindutva of RSS brand and later on BJS did not cut much ice in Bihar as it has its own traditions and schools of ancient learning.<sup>39</sup>

Politics in Bihar was in many respects different in the years following independence from what it was before. Though to start with; the Congress Party had its unchallenged hegemony which fast eroded with the passage of time.

To begin with; there were only two other political parties namely the Hindu Mahasabha, the political ancestor of BJS and the CPI, though their influence was marginal and vote-gathering and seat winning capacity almost nil. By the time of the first general elections, two more national parties Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) and Bharatiya Jana Sangh appeared.<sup>40</sup>

Notwithstanding the decline in the number of seats held and the percentage of votes polled by the Congress it retained its dominance and its infights and

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<sup>39</sup> Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey, *Bihar Me Jana Sangh* (in Hindu), New Delhi, 1969.

<sup>40</sup> Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey, *Sociology and Economics of Casteism in India - A Study of Bihar*, Pragati Publications, New Delhi, 1996 (Chapter on Bihar Politics (1947-67)).

factional rivalries and the working of its government had the largest impact on political life and culture of the state.

Other political parties reacted to what was happening inside the Congress and they were informally tied to and influenced by its factional correlations.

From 1952 to 67, the state politics in Bihar was characterised by the continued dominance of Congress Party. In state assembly as well as parliamentary elections, no other political party could beat the Congress to take its position as a governing party. Congress dominance in state politics was a characteristic of its hold over the upper castes constituency by accommodating their factional interests and leaders and the support from the middle castes and lower shudras who continued to support Congress in rural Bihar because a mild amount of land reforms measures initiated by successive Congress ministries.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, uppercastes dominance in rural Bihar based on patron-client relationship provided a solid support structures for the Congress dominance in Bihar politics.<sup>42</sup>

BJP's predecessor, the BJS drew blank polling slightly more than one percent of votes in 1952 elections. Thus, electorally BJS made to token show in Bihar in 1952 elections. In assembly elections, out of 47 seats it contested, lost deposits in 41 and failed to capture any single seat and secured just 1.18% of votes.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp.279-280.

<sup>42</sup> Ramashray Roy, *Caste and Political Recruitment in Bihar*, in Rajni Kothari (ed.) *Caste in Indian Politics*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1970.

<sup>43</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose *Op.Cit.*, 1988, p.24.

**TABLE 3.2****BJS PERFORMANCE IN BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS (1952-67)**

<b>Assembly Elections in Bihar</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>Contested</b>	<b>Won</b>	<b>Lost Deposits</b>	<b>Per Cent of votes</b>
1952	330	47	0	41	1.18%
1957	318	29	0	22	1.19%
1962	318	75	3	61	2.77%
1967	318	270	26	192	10.47%

Source: V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Electios (1952-1985) vol. 4, The North Part II, Sage Publications, 1988.

The break for BJS came only in 1967 when in assembly elections it showed a significant increase in seats share as well as vote share.

This fourth assembly election in 1967 marked the end of the end of the Congress rule in Bihar as it could capture only 128 of 318 seats in assembly. The valid votes polled by it fell to 33.1% from 41.4% in 1962. The Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) secured 68 seats followed by BJS. For the first time in post-Independent era, the Congress lost majority and power in the state. Socialists emerged as the second largest party and polled 17.6% of valid votes.<sup>44</sup>

The defeat of the Congress was due to the intense infights and the alienation of two powerful land-owning castes, Bhumihars and Rajputs.<sup>45</sup>

Congress ministries in the state from 1952 onwards faced factional politics based on castes. Bhumihars, Kayasthas and Rajputs competed with one

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>45</sup> Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey, *Op.Cit.*, 1996, p.302.

another to maintain their hold in the party. This led to the weakening of the organisation.

The same case was with Socialist Party in Bihar. The reality in Bihar was that even after leaving the Congress, the Socialist Party remained an extension of former's factional politics. There were two clear-cut factions in the Socialist Party. The faction led by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) was close to the Kayastha - Rajput faction of Bihar Congress while the other headed by the Ramnanda Mishra was nearer to the Bhumihar faction.

During the entire period of Congress ministries, the shadow of Sahay Sinha rivalry remained visible and aggressiveness of Bhumihar supporters of Mahesh Prasad Sinha brought a big division in the Sinha-Sahay faction. The non-Bhumihar Caste members of the faction were not treated on par with Bhumihar's members. Gradually, it's social base started shrinking.<sup>46</sup>

In the fourth assembly elections of 1967, the biggest jump in the number of seats and percentage of votes was made by the Jana Sangh. It won 26 seats with 10.4 percent of votes. In the first two general elections, it had drawn blank so far as seats were concerned and had polled only 1.1 percent and 1.2 percent of votes in 1952 and 1957 respectively. In 1962, it secured 3 seats and polled 2.5 percent of votes.<sup>47</sup>

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh experienced as in U.P. for the first time the ministerial experience in Bihar after 1967 elections.

The first BJS ministerial experience was Bihar where the party had vastly increased its representation from four to 26. The 128 members of Congress group in 318 members state assembly had no possibility of forming a ministry. The opposition turned to "rebel Congressmen" Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, leader of the Jana Kranti Dal (JKD), a group which also held 26 seats in the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.303.

<sup>47</sup> V.B. Singhand Shankar Bose, *Op. Cit.*, 1988, pp.24-25.

assembly. The principal constituent of the opposition group was the Samyukta Socialist Party with 68 seats.<sup>48</sup>

The Samyukta Vidhyak Dal (SVD) was formed of SSP, PSP, CPI, JKD and BJS. It formed the first non-Congress government which was headed by Mahamya Prasad Sinha.

Initially, there was some hesitation on the part of Jana Sangh which was not pleased with the idea of joining a coalition with the socialists and communists and communists.

Rather than find itself with the Congress in opposition, the Jana Sangh accepted the SSP conditions. Two Jana Sangh legislators were induced as cabinet rank ministers and one as minister of state.<sup>49</sup>

The Bihar coalition ministry in which BJS was an important ally has not had an easy path. It was faced with substantial defections including three elected on the Jana Sangh ticket when the Soshit Dal was formed by a former SSP minister. The Jana Sangh ministers opposed tooth and nail the proposed land reforms measures and the abolition of Tata's Zamindari rights in Jamshedpur.<sup>50</sup>

The Jana Sangh disagreed with the provision in the agreed policy of the coalition which could accord Urdu as the status of second official language in Bihar.

One other Jana Sangh member was reported to have defected in October 1967. There were also acrimonious exchanges between the Communists and the Jana Sangh especially after a series of communal disturbances in Ranchi district. By

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<sup>48</sup> Statesman, New Delhi, 5 March, 1967.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>50</sup> Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey *Op. Cit.*, 1969, p.24.

the defection of its three member, the strength of the Jana Sangh in Bihar dropped from 26 to 23 at the end of 1967.<sup>51</sup>

Two important factors played an important role in improving its electoral fortunes during this period.

The changing balance of caste alignments after the death of S.K. Sinha, alienated the powerful Bhumihar community from the Congress. While a large number of middle and small Bhumihar peasants tilted towards the socialists, a section of erstwhile Zamindars and rich peasants veered round Jana Sangh. It is said that two Bhumihar leaders of the RSS - BJS namely Kailash Pati Mishra and KBPN Sinha of Rami Bigha, played a key role in this.

There was another factor that helped advance Jana Sangh's electoral fortunes. It was the attitude of the other non-Congress parities. To profit by the prevailing discontent against the Congress, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia came out with his thesis of non-Congressism and tried to combine all the disparate forces and elements hostile to the Congress. In Bihar seat adjustment took place among them. The CPI, an important ally in non-Congress faction came out with its helpful thesis of the existence of two wings: "One progressive and other reactionary in Jana Sangh, advocating the need of combining with the progressive faction led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee in order to isolate Balraj Madhok and his "reactionary faction".<sup>52</sup>

From 1969 to 1972, it remained away from the coalitional logic of then prevalent Bihar politics. The acrimony created in 1967 with other constituents of Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD) on the issues of land reforms and Urdu did not cool down. But it benefited from that alliance as it helped it greatly in expanding its support base. Its consistent opposition to landreforms measures and Urdu improved its image among the conservative section of upper castes.

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<sup>51</sup> Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Oct. 21, 1967.

<sup>52</sup> Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey, *Op. Cit*, 1996, p.327.



In 1969 assembly elections it contested in 303 segments, won 34 seats with 15.6% of votes polled. This was a significant improvement in both vote-share and seat share in respect to the 1967 assembly results. In 1972 assembly elections, BJS contested 270 seats, won 25 seats with 11.7% of votes polled. This time, it showed a decrease in both seat share and vote share.<sup>53</sup>

Between 1952 to 1969, it appeared that there was a secular decline in both Congress and Socialists votes in all the regions in Bihar. BJS, it seems, gained at their expense in these regions.

**TABLE 3.3**

**PERCENTAGE OF VOTES POLLED BY THREE MAJOR  
POLITICAL FORMATION IN BIHAR VIDHAN SABHA ELECTIONS  
(Region-wise from 1952-69)**

Political Parties	Region	1952	1957	1962	1967	1969
Congress Party	North Bihar	47.7	46.4	43.3	33.8	35.6
	South Bihar	41.8	44.6	45.6	34.6	28.6
	Chhotanagpur	28.8	32.2	43.6	31.4	24.1
Socialists	North Bihar	28.4	19.3	26.4	29.3	23.1
	South Bihar	25.3	18.7	19.1	25.2	17.9
	Chhotanagpur	7.9	5.0	4.3	7.9	9.4
Bharatiya Jana Sang	North Bihar	1.2	1.5	2.3	8.6	14.1
	South Bihar	1.8	1.5	4.8	11.8	16.2
	Chhotanagpur	1.1	0.3	0.6	18.2	24.8

Source: CSDS Data Unit; New Delhi.

Like U.P., in Bihar also, BJS had support from the Rajputs, the traditional martial caste that is attributed to the Jana Sangh's variety of militant nationalism. Like U.P. it has also been winning rural support in Bihar. Like the

<sup>53</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Op. Cit*, 1988, p.25.

Congress Party, the Jana Sangh draws its support from the upper castes, the Brahmins, Rajputs and Kayasthas and from the merchants castes, the Vaishyas in town.

The Jana Sangh's appeal has been to those who held authority in the old social order the Rajput warrior castes, the former landlord classes like Bhumihar and to the middle propertied strata, particularly the merchants in some areas and the newly urbanised lower middle classes. The Jana Sangh had little influence upon lower social strata either in towns or in rural areas both in Bihar and U.P.<sup>54</sup>

In Bihar especially it appeared that Jana Sangh could win away a substantial section of landed interests besides banias in towns. Jana Sangh attracted in particular the Bhumihar caste because of its opposition to land reform measures after Zamindari abolition and promotion of Kailash Pati Mishra a Bhumihar to leadership.<sup>55</sup>

In its long term perspective in mobilising various other social groups, and after a good deal of analysis it came to the conclusion that it could win over upper castes in general and Kayasthas in particular to its side.

It began working on the Kayasthas who were more vulnerable to its influence for various reasons. To begin with, Kayasthas had been gradually alienated from the Congress since 1962. The refusal to grant another term of Presidency to Rajendra Prasad had angered them. The ouster of K.B. Sahay from power and ultimately from the Congress added fuel to the fire.

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<sup>54</sup> Craig Baxter, *Op. Cit.*, 1988, p.35.

<sup>55</sup> Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey, *Op. Cit.*, 1996, p.341.

Jayaprakash Narayan had given respectability to Jana Sangh and the RSS by associating them with the famine relief work in 1967 and the handing over the conduct of his movement for "Total Revolution" in 1974-75. In fact, he became a bridge between the Sangh Parivar and his castemen.

Besides, there was a strong economic reason for their being attracted towards Jana Sangh. Job-reservation initiated by Karpoori Thakur posed greatest threat to them. They did not have substantial landed property and traditionally they had depended on government jobs and medical and legal professions for their livelihood. Industrial entrepreneurs were very few among them. They seemed to be the most endangered species to whom Jana Sangh appeared to be a saviour as it opposed job-reservation on the basis of caste.

Thakur Prasad, a leader of Jana Sangh played an important role incultivating the Kayasthas. Since then Kayasthas have been overwhelmingly with the Sangh Parivar.<sup>56</sup>

The period from 1975 to 77 provided an important space for BJS to emerge as a distinct political entity in state politics.

The whole agitation against emergency was crystallised in to the JP movement in the north Indian region. Being the birth place of J.P. movement, Bihar provided an unique opportunity for BJS to secure political recognition by other political parties.

It all started with the participation of BJS's students wing Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in a vigorous student movement against the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. pp.360-361, (Rajendra Prasad, K.B Sahay and Jaya Prakash Narayan were Kayastha by their caste).

corrupt regime of Bihar. The agitation was carried on in the name of Bihar Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti (BCSS) formed in 1971 of various students organisations of different political parties.<sup>57</sup>

Party-wise one third of the members of BCSS belonged to the ABVP. The movement thus was dominated by RSS-Jana Sangh in particular. Very soon, ABVP took the lead in subsequent course of agitation. Jayaprakash Narayan was so impressed by their efforts in the agitation that he went to address several RSS meetings as well as ABVP's led morchas.<sup>58</sup>

Bharatiya Jana Sangh was also in a tactful alliance with other opposing political parties. It took participation with other parties in opposing the emergency. Its many leaders and activists were jailed in Bihar.

Although, this did not result in the immense improvement in its electoral prospects in subsequent elections but it certainly provided a bigger political space for BJS in the state's political activities.

In May 1977, the state government was dismissed even though the state assembly in which the Congress enjoyed a majority had almost 10 months of its terms left. The assembly elections took place soon after. BJS was absorbed into the Janata Party. Then, it had no independent entity rather was a part of broad Janata coalition.

In the assembly elections of 1977, Congress seats slumped from 168 to 57 and the percentage of votes from 33.1 to 23.6 percent. The Janata Party bagged as

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<sup>57</sup> Ghanshyam Shah, *Protest Movements in Two Indian States: A Study of the Gujarat and Bihar Movements*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1977.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.98-99.

many as 214 seats, a record in the state since 1957. It had reaped the benefits of an unprecedented anti-congress wave generated by the excesses of the emergency and the disastrous policies pursued by the myopic state Congress governments.

The Janata Party formed the government in the state in which BJS also participated. The Jana Sangh faction of the Janata party was the most organised one. Its parent body - the RSS - continued to regulate and guide its activities.

But, the ruling Janata Party was a divided house from village level to national level. As a result of break-up of Janata party in 1980; BJS, now rechristened as BJP decided to keep itself away from the Janata formation.

In subsequent elections too, it fought on its own and did not align itself with other political party. The 1980 assembly elections resulted in the comeback of Congress to power in the state. BJP contested in 246 segments, won 21 seats with 8.4% of votes polled. In 1985 assembly elections too, it contested 234 seats, won 16 seats with 7.5% of votes polled<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Op.Cit.*, 1988, p.26.

## CHAPTER IV

### BJP IN THE STATE POLITICS OF U.P. AND BIHAR (1986-1996)

The fourth chapter basically deals with the BJP's performance in the state elections. This is in the continuance of analysis done in the third chapter which presents BJP's electoral and political picture in pre-1986 phase. Assembly elections are taken up for the analyses although with a background picture of parliamentary elections.

We engage in a discussion of the issues involved in the elections and BJP's policy orientations in particular.

As visible in the second chapter: U.P. and Bihar have very distinct sub-regional set-ups. The economic activity, social-demographic composition, and even political character often differ from one sub-region to another. So there is also an attempt to locate BJP's political activity and electoral performance at the sub-regional level in these two states.

Uttar Pradesh the core of the Hindi heartland and in terms of population, the country's biggest state has enormous political significance in any elections. In the typologies of the state party system, U.P. can best be described as a competitive multi-party system: Congress, Janata Parties and the BJP<sup>1</sup>.

After mid-1980s onwards, U.P. has witnessed a phenomenal growth of BJP in political and electoral arena. Compared to elections its performance

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<sup>1</sup> Paul R. Brass, *Indian Politics since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, New York (Second ed.), 1994, p.127.

immensely improved. Although it had ministerial experience in state government in 1967, 1970, 1977 and 1991, it formed the government on its own.

U.P. has been a communal battle ground since 1986 when the troika of Rajiv Gandhi, Arun Nehru and Bir Bahadur Singh threw open the Babri Masjid to the Rama bhaktas in a misbegotten attempt to pre-empt criticism of the Muslim Women's Bill from Communalist of the other camp. Eversince, the Congress's position on the dispute has been characterized by a degree of cynicism. The nadir of this policy of wanton neglect came in Oct-Nov. 1989 when town after town in the North was flaring up in communal violence following the VHP's aggressive sponsorship of the bizarre ritual of brick worship across the region.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, Rajiv Gandhi saw nothing wrong in travelling to Ayodhya and launching his campaign from there with the promise to usher in a Ram Rajya, if elected. He followed this up with the pre-posterous claim - after the Shilanyas puja had been concluded on a part of the disputed land.<sup>3</sup>

But, by then, the game was up. The BJP had snatched the communal card from the faltering grasp of the Congress through the conspicuous participation of high party functionaries in the brick worship ritual.<sup>4</sup>

This clearly shows the crucial role of the Congress regime in facilitating the political advance of the BJP by creating the conditions and climate for the growth of the politics of communalism. It is also important to note that the

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<sup>2</sup> S.M. Menon, U.P.: *Saffron Triumphs by Default*, Frontline, Madras, July 6-19, 1991, pp.110-113.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.112.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.112.

BJP could not have capitalized on these condition without concerted ideological propaganda and the communal polarisation and violence engendered by its activities and that of its affiliates like VHP. Bajrang Dal and RSS.

The Congress Party in 1980s faced a crisis of legitimacy and hegemony. From the 1920s, Uttar Pradesh was a Congress stronghold, the centre-piece of the Congress system. While its support was drawn from across the country, it was the party's hold in U.P. that symbolized the essence of Congress politics. The collapse of Congress Party is nowhere more apparent than in U.P. where it has suffered a sharp decline in popularity.<sup>5</sup>

The challenge to Congress supremacy came from two quarters. One was the rural coalitions forged by the various Janata formations in the 1970s and 1980s which combined an advocacy of the farmer's interest with a call for empowering the non-upper castes.<sup>6</sup>

The other equally serious challenge came from the BJP and its politics of Hindu nationalism. In Uttar Pradesh, militant communal mobilization, with an explicitly anti-Muslim focus altered the political alliances and existing structures of power and domination.<sup>7</sup>

A weak electoral force, political Hinduism under BJP acquired unprecedented strength from the mid-1980s. At no point before 1991 did the BJP win even one quarter of votes or seats in Uttar Pradesh assembly. The highest vote of 21

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<sup>5</sup> Zoya Hasan, *Party Politics and Communal Mobilisation in Uttar Pradesh*, in Praful Bidwai Harbans Mukhia and Achin Vinaik (ed.), *Religion Religiosity and Communalism*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1996, pp.249-250.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.250.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.250.



percent was achieved in 1967. But, the party could not maintain this level in subsequent elections, the average vote (excluding 1967) is around 10 percent.

Seat adjustments by the BJP with the Janata Dal in 1989 were crucial to the legitimization and rise of the BJP which quickly made inroads into non-traditional areas and among non traditional supporters.<sup>8</sup>

National and local issues got mixed up in U.P. The Urdu and Rama Janam Bhoomi/Babri Masjid issues were being played down except in Muslim localities. None of the parties were keen to play it up. - including ironically - the BJP. In U.P. the BJP did not exactly play the Hindu card as was done in other North Indian states. Its opposition to Urdu being accorded second official language status was also lukewarm. This facilitated its electoral tie-up with Janata Dal.<sup>9</sup>

The Bofors kickbacks and price-rise were no doubt live issues but local issues such as setting up a High court bench in western U.P. and the demands of the hill people. Caste also played its own traditional role in the mobilization strategies of the political parties.<sup>10</sup>

For the 85 Lok Sabha seats in U.P. Congress (I) had 84 nominees against the Janata Dal's 69. The BJP had 30 candidates. The Janata Dal had allotted 11 Lok Sabha seats to the BJP. In at least 19 Lok Sabha seats; the Janata Dal and BJP were locked in a triangular contest with the Congress (I).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.259.

<sup>9</sup> P.K. Roy U.P. *For the Prime Slots*, Frontline, Madras, November, 11-24, 1989, pp.9-11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>11</sup> P.K. Roy, *Life or death in U.P.*, Frontline, Madras, Nov.25-Dec.8, 1989, p.16.

Congress (I) failed to corner even one-fourth of the 85 Lok Sabha seats from U.P. A new phenomena however was the emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party, which proved detrimental to the Congress (I) more than the other parties, casting doubt over Congress hold over the traditional Harijan vote bank.<sup>12</sup>

The Janata Dal won 54 Lok Sabha seats which was the consequence of the advantage taken of the V.P. Singh factor mainly his crusade against corruption in Rajiv Government and the alienation of the Muslims from the Congress (I) particularly after the Ayodya Shilanyas. Another powerful factor besides these two which explains this tremendous performance of Janata Dal, however, is it's strategy of political mobilization of the highly upwardly mobilise non-upper castes groups like Jats in Western U.P. Moreover, Janata Dal in U.P. carried forward the legacy of previous BKD and BLD and then Janata Party of 60s and 70s respectively to focus mainly on these middle peasant caste groups with its numerical strength in Western, Central and Eastern U.P.

The other force that emerged strong was the BJP. As already observed in the third chapter, the Jana Sangh, its earlier incarnation had edged past the Socialists and the Swantantra Party in the 60s to emerge as the main opposition till Charan Singh came out of the Congress and formed the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) with its pronounced backward class appeal to claim that position.

The BJP won 8 Lok Sabha seats in U.P at least three of these in a triangular contests. Etah Bareilly and Jaunpur. In the five remaining constituencies, it won largely due to its electoral tie U.P. with the Janata Dal.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> P.K. Roy, U.P.: *Heartland Beats*, Frontline, Madras, Dec.9-22, 1989, p.22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22.

In the 1989 assembly elections also, it had an electoral tie-up with Janata Dal. The Janata Dal sure of victory decided to contest 350 assembly seats on its own. The BJP responded with 290 nominations. The Janata Dal was ready to concede at most 50 assembly seats to BJP. Hence, by the date of withdrawal the opposition parties were faced with triangular contests in over 200 constituencies. The Janata Dal finally put up 355 candidates and BJP 260.<sup>14</sup>

The Congress Party was routed in 1989 assembly elections in U.P. Due to division of votes among the parties, no party was able to gain absolute majority in the U.P. assembly. However, the Janata Dal gained 204 seats and was able to form a government.

Although, BJP was in alliance with JD in 59 segments, it secured 57 assembly seats in multi-cornered contests.<sup>15</sup>

**TABLE 4.1**

**PERCENTAGE OF VOTES POLLED BY DIFFERENT PARTIES IN  
RURAL CONSTITUENCIES IN MAJOR REGIONS OF U.P.**

Political Party	All Rural Constituencies	Hill Region	West Plain	Central Plain	East Plain	Bundelkhand
Congress	38.75	56.7	35.4	40.9	30.5	34.1
Janata Dal	36.08	33.6	45.1	34.9	30.4	17.0
BJP	12.48	6.3	10.8	10.4	14.5	27.5

*Source: Sudha Pai, Uttar Pradesh: Agrarian Change and Electoral Politics, Shipra Publication Delhi, 1993.*

<sup>14</sup> *Confusion over Seat-Adjustment*, The Hindu, Madras, 16th Nov. 1989.

<sup>15</sup> S.M. Menon, *Op.Cit*, Frontline, July 6-19, 1991, pp. 110-111.

An analysis of this table shows that BJP had its better presence in upper Plains and central lower plains compared to other three. It had immense performance in the rural constituencies of Bundelkhand. It faced challenge from the Congress Party in this region which got 34.1 percent.

The BJP had a rural base in U.P. though it was far more limited than that of the Janata Dal or Congress. Its base seemed to be among the bigger feudal oriented landowners who have not taken to modern agriculture on a large scale. In regional terms, its support was also in the non-Green Revolution areas characterised primarily by such class in Bundelkhand. In Bundelkhand, the number of medium and large landholdings are much higher than in any other region. However, it is the BJP which emerged as the party of the biggest landholders.<sup>16</sup>

In U.P., the BJP has traditionally been the party supported by the ex-zamindars and bigger feudal landlords, a fact supported by the analysis in third chapter. The BJP also emerges as a party with a rural base and not merely “urban shopkeepers” party as described by the studies in the 1960s.

The fall of National Front government at Centre after the withdrawal of support by BJP in the wake of the decision to implement the Mandal Commission report led to the seeking of fresh mandate. Janata Dal, the biggest constituent of National Front was split and a new political party, Samajwadi Janata Party emerged on the political scene. This political development at national level had its reflection in U.P. too. The split in Janata Dal and relative weakness of Congress(I) in U.P. provided a lot of space for BJP.

The 1991 U.P. State assembly elections were held just eighteen months after the previous 1989 elections. However, in many ways, the 1991 election was

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<sup>16</sup> Sudha Pai, *Uttar Pradesh: Agrarian Change and Electoral Politics*, Shipra Publication Delhi, 1993.

very different from the previous one. The issues before the electorate, the party manifestoes, style of campaigning and methods of political mobilization of the major political parties as well as their results were very different. While in 1989 the Ram Mandir issue did, figure with the formation of the Janata Dal agrarian issues and agrarian inequality between regions and classes were also important. By 1991 elections the Ram Mandir-Babri Masjid (RMBM) dispute assumed national importance and issues such as the nature of secularism in India, the status of minorities, Communal disharmony and the role of the state in these matters became important electoral issues for all political parties and the electorate as a whole.

The 1991 state assembly election was dominated by larger national rather than local issues. Three major national issues figured in the manifestoes and campaigns of the main political parties in U.P. and affected their electoral results:

1. Ram Mandir-Babri Masjid issue which was more important in U.P. than elsewhere in the country because the dispute area fell within its boundaries.
2. Extent and nature of reservations to backward castes. An issue on the centre-stage after the announcement of V.P. Singh government at the centre to implement the Mandal Commission Report.
3. The state of the economy and the type of economic policies required to meet the economic crisis.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *How the Manifestoes Compare - This is What the Major National Political Parties have to say on various issues in their Manifestoes.*, Indian Express, New Delhi, 5th May 1991.

The first two issues played an important role in the campaigns of political parties in U.P. The Mandal issue was overshadowed by the communal mobilization of the BJP.

When BJP was threatened with a loss of political initiative as a result of the agitation against the Mandal Commission, it decided to re-launch the Mandir programme through Advani's rath-yatra. The rath yatra was in fact a diversionary move that with its emphasis on a putative Hindu unity,, cleverly harnessed the anti-Mandal sentiment. BJP adopted the name of Ram as a mascot for it in the 1991 election campaign across the country. The pledge to build a temple to Rama and on that very spot where the Babri Masjid stands was re-affirmed.<sup>18</sup>

A concerted bid was made by the RSS-VHP-BJP combine to change the political discourse by forefronting disputed shrines as an emotive focus of mobilization.

Attention was concentrated on a single symbolic issue -- the continued existence of a mosque on the site in Ayodhya, venerated by Hindus as Ram janamabhoomi. The BJP made masterly use of religious symbolism to mount the most ambitious programme of social and religions mobilization.<sup>19</sup>

In U.P. the BJP's expansion is more recent -- its impressive political presence in the 1990s is linked strongly to the Ayodhya movement. The most important actor in this movement is the VHP and its a assortment of priests and religious leaders. The party gained enormous strength from the ideological and religio-

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<sup>18</sup> S.M. Menon, *Op. Cit.*, Frontline, July 6-19, 1991, p.113.

<sup>19</sup> Zoya Hasan, *Party Politics and Communal Mobilisation in Uttar Pradesh, Op.Cit.*, 1996, p.259.

cultural actions of the VHP and the street power of the Bajrang Dal formed in 1984.<sup>20</sup>

Political mobilization concentrated on ideological issues and a subjective articulation of grievances, memories and cultural differences specially engineered for the purpose of mobilization.<sup>21</sup>

Three themes characterised this mobilization: the intrinsic tolerance of Hinduism, the destruction of Hindu temples and state repression of Kar Seva in Ayodhya. The events surrounding the first attempt in Oct. 1990 to demolish the Babri Masjid were consecrated to highlight the heroic saga of Hindu warriors fighting against the state. Opposition to the state was dramatized by the police action ordered on Kar Sevaks in Ayodhya by Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav. Barring this there is no evidence of opposition from the state.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, a great deal of the Ayodhya movement's strength derived from its ability to draw upon the cooperation of the state machinery in U.P. The administration and security personnel were more than willing to oblige the Kar Sevaks whom they recognised as partners in forging Hindu nationalism.

The upheaval created by the Ramjanambhoomi movement in Uttar Pradesh then was fuelled by the decay of the state. Its appeal was strongest there because all three disputed shrines - Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi are located in it.

The BJP also gained enormously from its ties with the VHP, and the numerous social cultural and religious organizations associated with the RSS which

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.260.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.260.

<sup>22</sup> Pioneer, 31 Oct., 1990.

appear to link the party with the traditional values and concerns of popular Hindu culture in Uttar Pradesh. It used these ties to heighten the friction between the state and the public arena increasingly dominated by the RSS-VHP through its congregational politics linking the home, the street and the temple. This new style of politics is specifically built around religious festivities requiring public participation and culminating in processions winding through communally surcharged towns intensified pressure on the state as any denial of public space was interpreted as anti-Hindu.<sup>23</sup>

At the heart of the RSS-VHP-BJP combine's project was the goal of creating a Hindu political majority with a distinct cultural dimension. In U.P. the effort was by no means confined to an internal consolidation of the Hindu community alone. The cohesion of the community was based on a rejection of cultural pluralism and the exclusion of Muslims who formed an important part of U.P.'s social and cultural milieu for centuries.<sup>24</sup>

BJP's strategy operated at two levels. At the ideological level, the propagation of the theory of pseudo-secularism and minorityism helped the party to win many adherents among middle classes, professionals, the print media, most notably the Hindi media. At the populist level, it unleashed crude anti-Muslim rhetoric to mobilise support on the streets. As Amrita Basu notes, Hindu organisations villainized the state and Muslims in the breath, that state's policy of appeasement had bred their aggression<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Uma Chakravarti, Prem Chowdhary, P.K. Dutta, Zoya Hasan, Kumkum Sangari and Tanika Sarkar, *Khurja Riots, 1990, Understanding the Conjuncture*, Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, 5th May, 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Zoya Hasan, *Party Politics and Communal Mobilisation in Uttar Pradesh*, *Op.Cit.*, 1996, p.261.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.261.



This polarisation along religious lines was bolstered by the high concentration of Muslims in Merrut, Moradabad, Bulandshahar, Ghaziabad, Rampur and Aligarh. Consequently the party did exceptionally well in areas with a large Muslim population or where there was extensive rioting and incidentally a lot of VHP activity which seems to have functioned as a vanguard of the BJP.<sup>26</sup>

As a social phenomenon BJP's variety of political Hinduism derives strength mainly from the ranks of the upper caste population in smaller cities and semi-urban areas of the state. A recent study indicates that the majority of Kar Sevaks who assembled in Ayodhya were urban, partly modernised and educated men<sup>27</sup>. The support for the Kar Sevaks came from a much broader section of the Hindu population, especially traders, small business. People and white collar workers, mainly from non-Brahmin upper castes<sup>28</sup>.

The growth area of the BJP is western and central U.P. -- areas in which Muslims are either economically prosperous or culturally visible. In both areas it has made significant inroads into rural areas. In western U.P. where growth has been shaped by the commercialization of agriculture and the rapid expansion of small towns such as Bulandshahar, Khurja, Aligarh, Merrut, Moradabad, there appears to be a strong coincidence of rapid socio-economic growth and increasing communalism.<sup>29</sup>

The Ayodhya movement very quickly managed to shift the political discourse from caste to religion and therefore away from the radical possibilities implicit

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp.262-263.

<sup>27</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Politics of Ayodhya*, The Times of India, New Delhi, 2nd Feb., 1993 and Seminar, Feb.1993.

<sup>28</sup> Pradeep K. Chibbar and Subhash Misra, *Hindus and the Babri Masjid: The Sectional basis of Communal Attitudes*, Asian Survey, Berkeley, California, July, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Uma Chakravathi, et. al. , *Op.Cit.*, 1992.

in Mandal. Mandal was overtaken by Mandir not only because of the intrinsic attachment to Ram in the land of the Aryavarta, but because Ram, the deity was dexterously transformed into Ram, the national hero.

The national content of the symbol provided both a rallying counter-ideology against the supposed divisiveness of Mandal and an incorporatist ideology that was capable of mobilizing the Hindus as an undifferentiated community. Very soon caste conflict was turned into a Hindu-Muslim polarization and rioting in which Muslims were the targets and victims as well.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, BJP's Ayodhya strategy helped to move it on the U.P.'s political centre-stage by the beginning of 1990s. In 1991 assembly elections, BJP was able to win 211 seats gaining a clear cut but slender majority. It gained about 33 percent of votes compared to 7 percent in 1989.

The two factions of Janata Dal - the Janata Dal and Samajwadi Janata Party - in sharp contrast were able to win only 91 and 30 seats respectively. The Janata Dal gained only 28 percent of votes cast as against 38 percent in 1989. The Congress fared badly winning only 46 seats and 18 percent of the votes which was lower than in 1977.

**TABLE 4.2**  
**1991 U.P. LOK SABHA AND ASSEMBLY RESULTS**

Political Parties	Lok Sabha Seats (85)	Assembly Seats (425)
BJP	50	211
Janata Dal	22	91
Congress I	5	46
SJP	4	30

Source: Centre for Studies in Developing Societies Data Unit, New Delhi.

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<sup>30</sup> Sukumar Murlidharan, *Mandal, Mandir and Masjid: Hindu Communalism and the Crisis of State* in K.N. Pannikar (ed.) *Communalism in India*, Mahohar Publications, Delhi, 1991.

UP is a large stage hence region-wise analysis of the electoral results provides us insight that a mere study of the total results doesn't.

The BJP was the only party which gained seats in every district/region of U.P., a feature which was characteristic of the Congress vote upto 1989, the only exception being 1977. It was able to win every constituency/seat in only 7 districts, but in 26 districts it captured at least ½ of the total constituencies which fell in them. This shows that the BJP was able to mobilise people across the entire state.

The BJP also performed well in the urban areas in U.P., winning about 62/79 of the major towns and cities (which form a constituency each). The Congress party gained only 5, Janata Dal - 4, SJP - 5 and BSP-1. In Kanpur for example, the BJP won in the Kanpur urban district area leaving the rural district area to the other parties<sup>31</sup>.

In regional terms, the BJP performed well in all the regions in 1991 Lok Sabha elections too.

**TABLE 4.3**

**REGION-WISE PERFORMANCE OF BJP IN LOK SABHA ELECTIONS, 1991.**

Regions	Seats Share	Vote's Share
Hill tracts (4 constituencies)	4	40.3
Western Region (20 constituencies)	12	37.7
Upper Plains (16 constituencies)	14	37.2
Central lower plains (18 constituencies)	11	30.3
Eastern lower plains (27 constituencies)	9	27.2

Source: Frontline, Madras, July 6-19, 1991.

For assembly elections, in the regional terms, the BJP performed well in all the regions. In the hill regions, out of 19 constituencies covering the 8 districts it

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<sup>31</sup> Sudha Pai, *Op. Cit*, 1993, pp. 130-31.

won 14. In 1989, the BJP had not been able to get even a single assembly seat here.

The improved performance of the BJP was not due to the Mandir issue alone. The voters were also influenced by the call for a separate Hillstate to be called Uttaranchal. However, the Mandir issue definitely had an impact on the pilgrimage centres in the hills and the party gave ticket to important leaders of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal. Thus, the Mandir issue coupled with the demand for a separate hill state led to the victory of the BJP in the hill areas.<sup>32</sup>

In the Western plains area, the BJP for the first time performed very well. Out of a total 151 constituencies covering 19 districts, the BJP won in 76. Considering that 18 seats are vacant in these districts as elections were not held in them, it won almost in ½ of the total constituencies. In Bijnor and Pilibhit it won all the constituencies and in 12 others it won more than ½ the constituencies. In 1989 it had won only 18/151 seats in mainly the Central districts of the western regions which was not a strong hold of BLD.<sup>33</sup>

In 1991, the two factions of the erstwhile Janata Dal failed to get the support of Mahendra Singh Tikait, leader of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) which shifted to the BJP. This was because of Mulayam Singh Yadav's treatment of the farmers and arrest of Tikait in 1990. Refusal to accept the Jat's demand to be included for job-reservation under Mandal Commission also tilted their loyalty towards BJP. These together with the Ayodhya issue resulted in a shift of Jat votes to the BJP. However, it is important to note that in a section of west U.P. stretching from Agra northwards to Saharanpur (8 districts), the Janata Dal performed well and in some districts better than the BJP. The agrarian

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.131.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.131.

lobby therefore did not completely desert the Janata Dal/SJP in its traditional stronghold.<sup>34</sup>

In Central up, although the BJP gained 63/113 seats as compared to 7 in 1989, in this region, the Janata Dal, SJP and Congress performed better than in the western region, providing some competition to the BJP.

While the BJP did uniformly well in almost all districts, the seats gained by the other parties were concentrated in different parts of the region i.e. in districts where they have traditionally had a base. The Congress did well as the BJP in a stretch of 6 districts stretching from central U.P. to the Terai -- Sultanpur, Rai Bareilly, Unnao, Hardoi, Sitapur and Khetri. In 1989 Congress gained 36 seats here. The Janata Dal and SJP gained seats in the 3 contiguous districts of Allahabad, Fatehpur and Kanpur, gaining 34 seats between them compared to 49 in 1989. The BJP's performance was better in the districts bordering Faizabad.<sup>35</sup>

Bundelkhand has always been a stronghold of the BJP and the party won 11 i.e. ½ of the seats in the region as against 7 last time. Hence, in Bundelkhand, there was not much change from the 1989 elections.

In East U.P., the BJP was far ahead of all parties winning 61, i.e. ½ of the seats against 15 in 1989. It won a majority of these seats from the northern districts stretching from Bahraich to Deoria and in Varansi district. Its performance was not as good in the South Eastern districts of Ballia, Ghazipur, Azamgarh and Mirzapur.<sup>36</sup> The northern tier districts have always been a traditional

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.132.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.132.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.133.

stronghold of the Jana Sangh/BJP as they have a large number of big Hindu landowners.

The victory of the BJP can be traced to a number of inter-related factors operating in U.P. prior to the 1991 elections:-

1. Internal factionalism and a split in the Janata Dal in November 1990, which rendered its base in U.P. ineffective for the 1991 elections. While many factors contributed to internal factionalism within the party, the Mandal Commission Report and the agitation it led to; was a major reason for the division of the party.
2. The Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri Masjid dispute which became important because the BJP planned its entire strategy of political mobilisation around this issue in 1991 to counter the issue of Reservations which was intended to help the Janata Dal.
3. The decay of the Congress Party machinery and loss of its base due to its inability to take a clear stand on the above issues. The party in U.P. was badly divided prior to the 1991 elections which contributed to its poor performance.

This together with the split in the Janata Dal created a power vacuum which the BJP was able to take full advantage of.

The political scene at national level as well as state level in Indian was in a state of flux from the beginning of 90s characterized by alignments and re-alignments of different political forces. U.P. in this case assumed a special place.

By 1991, BJP in U.P. was an established political party. After assembly elections it formed the government in the state on its own headed by Kalyan Singh, a Lodhi Rajput by caste.

On December 6, 1992, the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya (around which BJP built its strategy of political mobilisation and support base) was desecrated by VHP-Bajrang Dal - Shiv Sena activists, the cohorts of the same Sangh Parivar to which BJP also belonged. This created a prospect of large scale communal disturbances in the state thus leading to grave law order problems. On this ground the BJP government headed by Kalyan Singh was dismissed by the Central government.<sup>37</sup>

The President's rule continued uptill 1993. The assembly elections were announced to be held in November and December. By this time, with the desecration of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, BJP started loosing much of its communal elan. With Ayodhya issue no more on the centre-stage, it found it very difficult to grab the issues which might provide rallying point in the state elections.

BJP also came to face a difficult situation in 1993 assembly elections because of electoral tie-up of Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party. This tie-up announced just before the assembly elections had all the strength to limit the BJP's political and electoral advance in the state politics.

Samajwadi Party was a re-incarnated version of Samajwadi Janata Party under the leadership of Mulayam Singh Yadav, whose stand on the Ayodhya issue in mid-80s and his maiden attempt to save the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya from Kar Sevaks in 1989 won him a laudable support from the Muslims in U.P. S.P. mainly concentrated on mobilising powerful middle non-uppercaste peasantry Yadav (Ahirs); Kurmis and Muslims. BSP mainly concentrated on the mobilisation of dalits in the state.

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<sup>37</sup> India Today, New Delhi, Dec.15-30, 1992, Feb. 1993.

Thus, SP-BSP alliance attempted to mobilise three distinct social categories, non-uppercaste peasantry, Muslims and Dalits. Among Uttar Pradesh's voters, for example, Harijans (Dalits) constitute about 21 per cent, Yadavs over 17 percent and Muslims nearly 19 percent. Together, it was a winning combination.<sup>38</sup>

In 1991, when Hindutva occupied the commanding heights of politics, the Janata Dal was badly divided and the other backward castes and even Harijan voters shifted their allegiance from traditional base to the BJP.

To prevent this trends in voting behaviour among OBCs and Harijans, SP-BSP entered into tactical alliance.<sup>39</sup> The 1993 assembly elections involved three principal contestants, Congress (I), BJP and BSP-SP the Janata Dal being reduced to be a token force after the formation of SP.

While BJP, in its political mobilisation and programmes, threw again the contentious and emotive issue of Ram Mandir in this election. But, the post-Mandal polarisations around the caste line by 1993 in many ways checked the BJP's Hindutva rhetorics.

In the immediate aftermath of the demolition, the state had witnessed widespread communal polarisation, indicating a cakewalk for the BJP in any election. But BJP failed to turn the 1993 assembly elections into a referendum on the Ayodhya Ram Temple issue. The main reason seems to be the time-lag between December 6 events and elections which considerably cooled off the situation on the ground. And more pressing issues that affect the common people directly, such as price rise, came to the fore.

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<sup>38</sup> Inderjit Badhwar, *Saffron Setback*, India Today, New Delhi, Dec. 15, 1993.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.



But it seems clear that in 1993 election, there emerged two broad platforms locked into the electoral battle, i.e. the Mandir Plank under the BJP and Mandal Plank under the SP and BSP. This major polarisations around these two broad issues further marginalised the Congress (I) and Janata Dal.

The 1993 assembly elections results threw a hung assembly in the state. No political party was able to secure absolute majority in the state.

BJP emerged as the largest party in the assembly with 177 seats followed closely by SP-BSP alliance with 176 seats. The JD and Congress secured 27 and 28 seats respectively. SP-BSP coalition mainly consolidated the votes of Janata Dal and a substantial chunk of Congress vote base also. BJP did not form the government as it was unable to gain outside support from other political parties in the assembly.

SP-BSP formed the government under the Chief Ministership of Mulayam Singh Yadav which garnered outside support from Congress and JD with the basic motive to keep BJP out of power.

The 1993 assembly elections verdict spelled the biggest setback for the BJP and the saffron brigade since the Hindutva juggernaut was unleashed circa 1986. It was in U.P. that the BJP government had presided over the demolition of Babri Masjid, it was here that the BJP had asked for a clear mandate and it was in U.P. that outcome was most significant. The BJP suffered a major political defeat for it was BJP which declared this election to be a referendum. During the election campaign, the dismissed Chief Minister Kalyan Singh repeatedly declared that a single seat less than 221 the BJP won in 1991 would mean its defeat. In that sense, the BJP stood defeated.

But, this election's result did not mean a total rejection of BJP in U.P. while the voter did not overwhelming came out to give BJP the kind of mandate it wanted, they had not rejected it either. The BJP's vote share has gone U.P.

from 31.6 percent to 33.4 percent, a net gain of 1.8 percent. Seen in the context of a significant rise in turnout as well it definitely indicated a rise in BJP's support base.

It was BJP versus the Congress in the hills of Uttarakhand. Here, the BJP lost 1.8 percent votes and had to split the seats this time. In upper Doab, the "Jat land", once dominated by the late Charan Singh, the BJP improved its position both in terms of votes (2.7 percent) and 13 seats mainly at the cost of the Ajit Singh - led JD which has lost 7.1 percent votes and 17 seats in this region.<sup>40</sup> In Lower Doab also the BJP gained 5.6 percent votes but lost four seats mainly due to the consolidation of non-BJP votes by SP-BSP.

In Bundelkhand, the voting pattern did not change significantly but SP-BSP picked U.P. five seats by combining their votes. In Rohilkhan, the region with highest Muslim population in U.P. the BJP lost 2.8 percent votes and 10 seats. The SP-BSP alliance did not have much base to begin with here as the Muslim voters tended to vote for the JD. But this time, the Muslims turned out in large numbers leading to counter mobilisation and resulting in 7 percent higher turnout than the state average to support Mulayam Singh Yadav whose alliance gained 7.9 percent votes and 13 seats. Avadh saw a neck-and-neck fight between the BJP and SP-BSP with both polling roughly the same share of votes. A better strategy and tactical voting has got SP-BSP 52 seats to BJP's 37 -- a net loss of 19 seats. In this region, the Congress lost 17 seats mainly in the districts dominated till recently by Indira Gandhi and her family members.<sup>41</sup>

In Poorvanchal, the biggest and most densely populated region of the state, the BJP gained 3 percent votes but lost 16 seats, due to a remarkable surge by the

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<sup>40</sup> Yogendra Yadav, *State Assembly Elections: An Analysis*, Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, 18 Dec., 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.,2772.

SP-BSP (9.2 percent swing over 1991) which united the non-BJP votes and enabled the alliance to capture 55 seats, a net gain of 43 over the last election. In this traditional stronghold, the votes of JD dropped by 8.6 percent and the total votes of Congress could not even touch the 10 percent mark. In overall term, the SP-BSP alliance gained 6.9 percent votes in U.P. while the JD lost about 7.5 percent. The Congress lost 2.9 percent votes over its already disastrous performance in 1991; making Uttar Pradesh the only state where the Congress got less than 20 percent of votes in two consecutive elections.<sup>42</sup>

The 1993 U.P. assembly election's results clearly show that BJP's Hindu support base remained firmly entrenched and the SP-BSP combine was able to consolidate behind it a majority of the hitherto disparate Muslim, OBC and dalit voters at a time when they were deeply resentful of the BJP's anti-Muslim and pro-upper caste politics in the state and when the Congress (I) seemed indifferent to their fate.

This polarisation around caste lines also shows that the voters of BJP remained largely upper castes people - Brahmins, Rajputs and Kayasthas and uppercaste business people based in towns.

The SP-BSP combine government formed after 1993 assembly elections could not survive for long. By 1994, BSP withdrew its support from the ministry and the government led by SP leader Mulayam Singh Yadav collapsed.

In a very fluid situation, a new kind of coalition emerged in the U.P. politics. BSP, now out of SP-led ministry got the support from BJP in the assembly to form the government on its own. BJP supported BSP in the formation of the ministry. It was seen as the BJP's strategy to improve its image among dalits. BSP government headed by Mayawati proved its majority in assembly by

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.2772.

getting the BJP's support. But this strange alliance of odds as described by the analysts could survive for bare four months.

With the withdrawal of support by BJP to BSP-led ministry, President's rule was imposed in up, which continued for almost one year. After that, the assembly elections were announced to be held subsequently with Lok Sabha elections, in 1996.

The 1996 assembly election scene presented altogether a different political picture in the state. New alignments and re-alignments emerged in U.P. politics. There were sharp moves by different political parties to win over one another in a bid to improve their electoral prospects in the incoming assembly as well as Lok Sabha elections.

The chief contestants in the electoral battlefield were BJP, Congress (I) with an alliance with BSP and United Front, a combination of SP, JD, CPI, CPI (M), Congress (Tiwari) and later, the Bharatiya Kisan Kamgar Party (BKKP) led by Ajit Singh whose area of influence ran around Jat dominated western U.P..

When BSP fell with the BJP, it entered into an electoral alliance with Congress which was an indication of the gradual transformation of the party into an inclusive party with space for all social groups. It was also seen as a move of a short-run strategy to catapult the party into a position to form a government in U.P. and as a means to capture Congress' remaining dalit and backward vote in U.P. and in other states. The intention of BSP was to consolidate the Party as a party of the dalits and minorities through this alliance and remake Congress from an umbrella party to an upper caste party.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Kanchan Chandra and Chandrika Parmar *Party Strategies in Uttar Pradesh Assembly Election, 1996*, Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, February 1, 1997.

After a half-hearted attempt at forming an alliance with the BSP, the BJP simply ignored caste in its overt election campaign. It conducted a diffuse election campaign that gave equal emphasis to a laundry list of issues - development, anti-corruption, law and order, a riot-free state, the anti-national activities of the ISI, construction of the Ram temple, a stable government, anti-casteism and did not cater to any specific constituency.<sup>44</sup>

In its candidate selection, however it did attempt to address caste more explicitly. Although there were conflicting reports about the precise ratio of tickets distributed to the upper and lower castes, all accounts were unanimous in highlighting the unprecedented caste based lobbying for tickets in the BJP in these elections, and agree that the BJP gave far greater representation to backward castes in its candidate selection than it had ever done in the past.<sup>45</sup>

The BJP in these elections consciously avoided the polarizing option of using a pan-Hindu, anti-Muslim banner to unite the various caste groups as it had attempted to do in its 1990 rath yatra. It chose the secular Samata Party, rather than the pro-Hindu, Shiv Sena, as an alliance partner<sup>46</sup>. It did not make the construction of the Ram temple a central issue in this campaign even in the constituency of Ayodhya<sup>47</sup>.

There was no state-wise co-ordination with the VHP as there had been in earlier elections and several prominent VHP campaigners including Sadhvi Rithambara, on whom the BJP had relied heavily for mobilising votes in previous campaigns, were kept away from the party's election meetings. Finally, Atal Bihari Vajpayee widely seen as the moderate face of the BJP.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.216.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.216.

<sup>46</sup> The Times of India, Lucknow Edition, August 4, 1996.

<sup>47</sup> The Times of India, Lucknow Edition, Sept. 28, 1996.

was prominently featured in video and audio-cassettes and other campaign materials.<sup>48</sup>

But, BJP did not disown the Hindu card entirely in this election. Faint echoes of it could be heard from the mention, the Ram temple was given in the party's state manifesto and from the brief references made to the construction of the Ram temple by BJP leaders in their election rallies.<sup>49</sup>

A formidable set of incentives and constraints led the BJP to avoid the strident Hindu-Muslim polarization that first brought it to power in U.P. First, there were uncertainties about the continued profitability of a pro-Hindu card in U.P. A pro-Hindu appeal had uncertain potential among an electorate that was already heavily mobilized along caste lines.<sup>50</sup>

Secondly, there was the question of the damage that a pro-Hindu card might do to the image of the party. As a party trying to project itself as a responsible party of government, the BJP couldn't afford to be perceived as a single issue party or party that fed upon communal violence.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, as a party trying to increase its acceptability as a potential alliance partner in a multi-party system, the BJP could not afford to raise issues that might drive other political parties away. The BJP's inability to attract enough alliance partners to form a government after the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, inspite of the fact, that it was the single largest party, would have sent a strong signal to party leaders about the costs that the party incurred by playing the Hindu card.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Asian Age, New Delhi, Sept. 21, 1996.

<sup>49</sup> The Times of India, New Delhi, Sept. 18, 1996.

<sup>50</sup> Kanchan Chandra and Chandrika Parmar, *Op. Cit*, 1997, p.217.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.217

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.217.

The assembly elections results in U.P. in 1996 again threw a hung assembly. No political party with their alliance partners together were able to gain majority in this elections. Out of 424 assembly seats where elections held - BJP - Samata alliance secured 176 seats which showed a constancy in its seat share compared to 1993 assembly elections results in U.P. The Congress-BSP alliance grabbed 100 seats and United Front (SP, JD, CPI, CPI(M) BKKP together) secured 134 seats, others and independents secured 14 seats.

The breakup of seats among UF constituents in 1996 assembly elections in U.P.

SP	-	110 seats
BKKP	-	8 seats
Janata Dal	-	7 seats
Congress(I)	-	4 seats
CPI(M)	-	4 seats
CPI	-	1 seat

It is clear that SP benefited out of the coalition with the partners in the UF securing an impressive 100 seats but a gain of only one seat compared to 1993 elections.

**TABLE 4.4**

**SEATS WON BY PARTIES IN U.P. ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 1993  
AND 1996 RESULTS COMPARED**

Electionheld	1993 (422)	1996 (424)
BJP	176	174
Samata party	Not existent	2
Samajwadi Party	109	110
Janata Dal	27	7
Congress (I)	28	33
BSP	67	67
CPI	3	1
CPI (m)	1	4
Congress (T)		4
BKKP		8

**TABLE 4.5**

**UP ELECTIONS, 1996: REGION-WISE RESULTS (SEATS SHARE)**

Region	Total seats	BJP Samata	UF	Congress BSP
Uttarakhand	19	17	2	--
Ruhelkhand	50	21	17	10
West U.P.	99	47	35	15
Bundelkhand	21	7	3	10
Central U.P.	75	23	23	29
East U.P.	160	61	54	36



**TABLE 4.6****UTTAR PRADESH ELECTION: REGION-WISE RESULTS - VOTE  
SHARE OF PARTIES IN ASSEMBLY POLLS**

Region	BJP + Samata percent of votes	Cong. + BSP percent of votes	UF percent of votes
Uttarakhand	44.7	21.5	20.5
Ruhelkhand	32.9	27.2	29.7
West U.P.	35.3	29.7	31.4
Bundelkhand	31.7	35.8	22.6
Central U.P.	33.4	33.2	30.2
East U.P.	32.4	27.4	31.1

*Sources: CSDS Data Unit, New Delhi*

In its votes share BJP secured above 30 percent of votes in all the regions of U.P. In Uttarakhand, its traditional stronghold, it secured 44.7 percent of votes. In Ruhelkhand, it secured 32.9 percent of votes. In west U.P. it was 35.3 percent of votes. In Bundelkhand, it trailed behind Congress-BSP alliance (35.8 percent) and secured 31.7 percent of votes. Considered to be BJP's stronghold Congress-BSP alliance made substantial inroads into upper castes and dalits votes together. In Central U.P. and East U.P. it is secured 33.4 percent and 32.4 percent of votes respectively. The vote share compared to 1993 election results in fact showed gain in these regions for the BJP.

As far as seats share was concerned it did impressively well in Uttarakhand followed by West U.P. (47 percent). But it showed losses in Bundelkhand due to presence of Congress-BSP alliance which succeeded in consolidating upper castes and dalits vote together, thus, winning ten seats of 21 seats in the region.

After an analysis of 1991, 1993 and 1996 assembly elections, it becomes clear that BJP in U.P. emerged as the single largest party. It was ruling party in the

state in 1991. In 1993 and 1996 it emerged as the single largest party in the state but failed to form the government due to absence of a majority in the assembly.

From 1991 onwards in both assembly as well as Lok Sabha elections in U.P., B.J.P. had been stuck at roughly one-third of the overall votes cast for elections in 1993 and 1996. Perhaps the explanation for the plateau in the party's vote share was that it had hit the point of saturation among upper castes who formed its core constituency.

Community and caste configuration of candidates of BJP for 1993 assembly elections in U.P. shows majority in favour of upper castes. Total 240 upper caste members contested the election in 1993. Out of which 83 belonged to Brahmin, 82 to thakurs, 82 to Viashyas, 24 to Jats, 7 to Kayasthas and 10 to Khattris and other. SC/ST and OBC numbers came upto to 94 and 85 respectively.<sup>53</sup>

The BJP made its greatest headway in U.P. in a conjuncture of crisis of Congress hegemony marked by heightened communal polarization and instability in the party-system. The link between the crisis of Congress hegemony and rise of the BJP is quite apparent in U.P.

The Ayodhya strategy helped the BJP to move to the centre-stage in the 1990s, although it's success was built on communal mobilisation. Consequently, the party did exceptionally well in areas with a large Muslim population or where there was extensive rioting and incidentally, a lot of VHP activity which seemed to have functioned as a vanguard of the BJP.

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<sup>53</sup> M.N. Srinivas, *The Cultural Revolution Moves North*, Indian Express, New Delhi, 12th December, 1993.

After coming to power, the BJP did not scale down its Ram rhetoric. The recurring metaphor of 1993 election, first after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, was a referendum on the issue of the Ayodhya movement. But, this single point agenda did not work as it had earlier. It made no great impact on the voter. This was obvious from the diminished appeal of the Ayodhya issue after the demolition of the disputed structure. Communal polarization did give an advantage to the BJP, particularly in urban areas, but it was not enough to give it a political majority. The party's vote share of 33 percent registered an increase of only two percent over its 1991 figure, despite a record turnout of 55 percent. This suggests that though party has consolidated the gains made in 1989-91, it has not grown beyond that, if any thing it had lost is some of its earlier support.

The BJP moves were checked by the emergence of a new alliance of backward castes, Dalits and Muslims led by Mulayam Singh Yadav. It is significant that in Uttar Pradesh, the Hindutva forces found it difficult to improve its support because 1993 election saw the emergence of a relatively clear alternative to the BJP and the Congress.

The Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party combine increased its Assembly seats from 42 to 176 by making inroads in to every region, with major gains in the BJP dominated eastern region.

The significant gains made by Samajwadi party - Bahujan Samaj Party alliance in 1993 on the basis of a distinct anti-status quo platform greatly reduced the electoral prospects of the BJP. Whatever gains the BJP made among the backwards and Dalits through the Ramjanmabhoomi movement were offset by its image as a natural upper caste Hindu Constituency.

There is little doubt then that participation in the Hindutva movement was not an adequate substitute for a more accommodative political arrangement to

satisfy the aspirations of backward classes and Dalits staking their claim to an unbrokered representation in the power structure.

The polarisation around castes in 1996 election to put grave limitations on BJP in expanding its vote share and increasing the seat share too. It found it difficult to grow beyond its natural constituency in a polarised political situation caste lines in state politics.

Politically, Bihar is the second most crucial state in the sprawling Hindi heartland. In Bihar also, the state party system can be characterized as the competitive multi-party system:- Congress, Janata formations and BJP

In Bihar politics, till 1967, BJP could not make substantial gains. In the Congress dominated party-system; it could not emerge in state politics. The break came in 1967 when it improved its electoral prospects and had first ministerial experience. This period signified a gradual process of the collapse of Congress system in Bihar politics. It also marked the political assertion of the non-upper castes social groups who were till now accommodated in the Congress umbrella. This process of the political growth of the middle castes like Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeris, Hajjams etc. over period of time developed into an alternative to the Congress party in Bihar politics. Samyukta Vidhyak Dal, and Janata Party in 1967 and 1977 respectively mainly based themselves on the support base of these social groups.

By the beginning of 90s, Janata Dal, reincarnated version of earlier SVD and Janata formations came to dominate the Bihar's political scene. BJP, supposedly an upper caste party in Bihar as well, at this stage, got completely marginalised both politically and electorally.

In the 1990s, BJP's Ayodhya mobilization and Hindutva plank did help it to emerge in the state's political scene. but could not break the dominance of Janata Dal in Bihar.

Unlike U.P., BJP's communal mobilisation did not pay it much dividends. The case of U.P. was different. As a centre of Ayodhya controversy: its communal appeal did help it in increasing its electoral prospects in 1991. Although it faced difficulty in expanding its electoral gains further in a context of Mandal polarisations in U.P. in subsequent elections, it succeeded in consolidating its support base as well as vote share in the elections.

In the context of Bihar ; Mandal politics reigned supreme and thus BJP could not make significant inroads into the support base of other parties out of its communal mobilization in the early 90s. Assembly elections of 1990 and 1995 provide a testimony to this argument. The Lok Sabha elections in 1989 and 1991 too give a grim picture of BJP in state politics.

But the 1996 Lok Sabha elections in Bihar gives a different picture. It shows a quite different strategy and modes of mobilization of BJP. It also showed a significant expansion in its support base.

In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, results proved to be in favour of Janata Dal, a backward caste dominated party with a rural mass base. It gained the most by cornering 31 seats of 34 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar.

The fort that Congress (I) built in Bihar in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections bagging a record 48 seats crumbled like a pack of cards. The rise of Janata Dal based on the political assertion of backward castes. forced the Congress bite the dust in all but four of 54 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state where it had recorded near-clean sweeps in both the 1980 and 1984 Lok Sabha elections.

The BJP followed the JD and had put U.P. an impressive show bagging 9 seats. The BJP's performance has been an unprecedented one, as the BJP and the erstwhile Jana Sangh had never been able to secure more than 9 seats. In

1984, it had lost all the seats it had contested, but had secured second position in six constituencies, all of which it won in 1989 elections.

The most redeeming feature of this election had been the loosening of the Dalits and Muslim votes from the grip of the Congress(I).

While Dalits mainly rallied behind the communists groups like CPI and Indian People's Front (IPF) and Muslims behind the Janata Dal, a section of upper castes also changed its loyalty to Congress and thus shifted to BJP.

The BJP's impressive performance and consolidation of support base by making inroads into upper caste constituency of Congress in Bihar was certainly a result of a Hindu backlash on the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue.

In almost all the villages of the state Ram Shila Pujans were performed, the timing of which was tactically fixed during the Dussera-Diwali festival period, hardly a month before the announcement of the Lok Sabha polls. And with the communal riots breaking out at about two dozen places the worst of course being at Bhagalpur as a consequence of the Shila Puja for the Ayodhya Temple launched by its corollaries the RSS, VHP and VHP's militant wing the Bajrang Dal in Bihar's towns and villages helped to achieve its twin objectives of causing a Hindu backlash in the BJP's favour and alienating Muslims from the Congress(I) due to its weak stand on Ayodhya issue.

This strategy yielded rich electoral dividends to the BJP in Bihar. However its performance should not be assessed in terms of the number of seats won. Rather it should be judged in terms of the spread of party's influence and the fact that it emerged as a political force in state politics.

Assembly elections were held in Bihar in 1990. The principal contestants were Congress(I), Janata Dal and BJP. The core issue which then occupied the

imagination of masses was the Ayodhya issue. The whole of the country was faced with heightened communal tensions leading to riots in towns and cities. Bihar was not an exception in this matter. The worst of riot in Bihar i.e Bhagalpur riot in 1989 took its heaviest toll.

The whole state was charged with gripping communal tension. BJP in the elections made Ayodhya issue its main poll plank. Janata Dal had in its heart the issue of Mandal Commission to channelise the interests of backward castes. Congress(I)'s position on these issues wavered and thus did not give a clear picture.

BJP's frontal organizations VHP and Bajrang Dal participated in all those activities which were intended to generate a Hindutva wave to benefit the BJP electorally. But in a highly polarised state along with caste-lines, the Hindutva issue found its own natural limitation. With Muslims, Backward castes and Schedule castes in the state siding with Janata Dal, BJP found its own support base very narrow.

The 1990 Assembly election saw the Janata Dal capturing power in the state. Out of 267 seats contested, it won 121 seats and secured 23.86 percent of valid votes polled. Although it did not get an absolute majority in assembly, it formed the government with an outside support from Communist Party of India (CPI) with 23 seats and 19 seats of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM).

Congress Party contested 322 seats, out of which it managed to win 71 seats and secured 24.65 percent of votes polled which was higher than Janata Dal.

BJP contested 232 seats, won 39 and secured 10.93 percent of valid votes polled. It secured 12.1 percent of seats won. This was an all time improvement in its electoral performance and still it remained at the third position in the state assembly.

Bihar has three distinct geographical regions : north, South and central Bihar. North Bihar which accounts for 146 assembly seats and 26 Lok Sabha seats holds an important place on the electoral map. The mineral rich south accounts for 81 assembly seats and 15 Lok Sabha seats and is important for its industry. Central Bihar which amounts for 97 assembly seats and 13 Lok Sabha seats is the main agricultural region. These regional differentiation have a bearing on the politics of the state.

North Bihar proved to be strong hold of Janata Dal winning total of 81 seats of 134 seats contested. It secured 32.6 percent of votes polled in the region. Congress came to second securing 29 seats of 146 seats contested and 25.3 percent of votes polled.

BJP in this region performed very badly. out of 85 seats contested it won just 5 seats and secured 75 percent of votes polled.

In central Bihar Janata Dal won 33 seats out of 80 seats contested and secured 22 percent of votes polled. Congress (I) contested 96 seats and won 22 and secured 24 percent of votes polled. IN this region too, BJP could not do well and won 13 seats of 76 seats contested and secured 11.8 percent of votes polled.

BJP had put an impressive performance in south Bihar winning 21 seats of 76 seats contested and second 22.4 percent of votes polled. Janata Dal incurred heavy losses in this region winning only 8 seats of 62 seats contested and securing 18.8 percent of valid votes polled.

The region for BJP's comparatively better performance in south Bihar was its consistent championing of the cause of a separate Jharkhand state which has its natural constituency in this region . BY this tactical stand on the formation of separate Jharkhand



state is succeeded in mobilizing a substantial tribal population of this region which once constituted the support base of the Congress Party.

After the fall of National Front Government at the centre and dissolution of Lok Sabha elections fresh poll was announced to be held in 1991. The whole country was then witnessing the saffron surge engineered by the BJP for its own electoral benefits. The announcement of the implementation of Mandal Commission by the National front government headed by V.P.Singh further increased the space for backward castes to assert politically.

Two predominant issues Mandal and Mandir occupied the minds of the masses. Janata Dal and its National Front allies espousing the cause of backward caste. BJP took every efforts to convert the Hindutva wave blowing in aftermath of L.K.Advani's Rathayatra into electoral benefits.

It was in the Bihar that Advani's Rathayatra was stopped by the Janata Dal government headed by Laloo Prasad Yadav. This move of Laloo Yadav further benefited the Janata Dal by consolidating Muslim votes in the state in its favour. The split in the Janata Dal at national level did not have much effect in Bihar and majority of the leaders stayed with the Janata Dal . The Samajwadi Janata Party, breakaway group failed to emerge in Bihar in real sense of the term.

In the 1991 Lok Sabha elections National front -Left front combine of which Janata Dal was a major ally in Bihar won 42 seats. BJP won five seats and came second in 15 others. The Congress(I) just managed to open its account with one seat and came second in 23 others.

The NF- LF combine lost three of seats won in 1989 but gained four new seats in the 1991 Lok Sabha election . The Congress(I) lost all the four seats it had won in 1989 but gained one seat of Begusarai. The BJP lost as many as six of

the nine seats it had won in 1989 and gained four seats winning five seats in the elections.

The Janata Dal and NF-LF combine's slogan of social justice proved to be a hit with the people in Bihar for a variety of reasons. In Bihar the middle and backward castes have been fighting against their oppression and exploitation from the days of the Triveni Sangh in the 1920s and 30s and a section of the middle castes which by the 60s had emerged as the new rich class and had been striving since then to replace the upper caste feudal lords as the ruling class.

In the late 60s they had a taste of power with the formation of non-Congress coalition government in the state. But the upper caste -dominated bureaucracy did not let it function for the full term.

When they again got a government of their choice in late 70s they fought for a larger share in the bureaucracy and after a protracted battle, the Karpoori formula was devised which provided reservation in state government jobs to these caste groups and to women and economically backward upper castes. The next step for them was to increase their share in central government jobs and for this they have been fighting ever since the Mandal Commission recommended reservation in central government jobs for the backward castes.

The Congress (I) and BJP tried their best to create an impression among the Kurmis and Koeris, the two middle castes which like the Yadavs have become prosperous in some parts of the state that the Janata Dal was basically a Yadav dominated party and that their interests could not be protected by it.

To woo the non-Yadav backward castes they even gave a larger share of party tickets to these castes. Congress(I) gave 9.3 percent to the Yadavs and 16.6 percent to non-Yadavs.

The BJP gave 14.8 percent of seats to Yadavs and 16.7 percent to non-Yadavs.

But, these attempts to split the middle caste votes and woo the non-Yadav castes failed and the polarisation of the backward classes in favour of the Janata Dal and NF-LF combine was complete. Equally sharp was the drift of the forward castes away from the NF-LF. The urban middle class, consisting of

government employees and professionals tended to change its loyalties depending upon immediate issues. IN 1989 as in 1977, it had overwhelmingly voted for Janata Dal and the BJP candidates. But this time in 1991 the majority of them turned away from the JD due to what it perceived as the "Mandalisation "

attempts of the Janata Dal.

The beneficiary of this drift away from the NF-LF was the BJP which gave as many as 45 percent of its tickets the largest share among all the parties to the forward castes aid which emerged as the new darling of the middle class in Bihar turns.

The remote chances of Congress(I) forming the government at the centre and the Hindutva campaign of the BJP convinced the caste Hindus that their interests could be better protected by the BJP. And so the caste Hindu votes of Congress(I) also drifted away from it and adopted the BJP, while the forward caste supporters of JD, enraged at the NF government decision to implement the Mandal commission's recommendations had already adopted the BJP.

And so the share of BJP votes increased while that of Congress (I) decreased.

In 1991 elections to Lok Sabha, in Bihar the BJP was confined to south Bihar winning Dhanbad, Ranchi, Khunti, Lohardaga and Palamu seats. The BJP won seats largely at the expense of the Congress in south Bihar. However the combined vote share of the BJP and the Congress at 40 percent was still below that of the National Front Left combine at 47.

Assembly election were held in 1995 in Bihar. This election took place after the five years completion of Janata Dal ministry headed by Laloo Prasad Yadav in the programmes and policies under the social justice platform during its ruling period from 1990 to 1995 had wide appeals among the backward castes, Dalits, Muslims, tribals and even poor among the forward castes such as Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs. During his hectic campaign across the state Laloo Prasad Yadav attacked the pro-rich, pro-upper castes politics of the Congress (I) and the communalism of the BJP. It had a special appeal to the poor and the minorities who accepted him and his party as one among them.

Initially, Janata Dal faced some difficulty before the assembly election. Due to split in Janata Dal, Samata party under the leadership of Nitish Kumar emerged. This party has its specific constituency among highly upwardly mobile backward castes - Kurmis and Koeris who came to perceive the Janata Dal (as led by Laloo Yadav) a Yadav dominated party and no more guardian of their own interests. This showed cracks in the social justice platform which was much evident in Bihar.

But, still Laloo Yadav due to his own charisma and a tactful handling of the situation maintained the winning combination of Yadavs, Muslims and Dalits in the state.

Congress(I) and BJP in this emergent situation felt completely marginalised in the electoral arena.

BJP did not attempt an alliance with the Samata Party and failed to exploit the cracks in the social justice platform of Janata Dal.

But however the split in Janata Dal and division of votes among the backward castes did help in the election in 1995.

In the 1995 assembly elections the Janata Dal reasserted its dominance by winning 167 seats with 27.6 percent of popular vote at a time when an anti-incumbency wave was sweeping the country.

Congress(I) won just 29 seats with 16.5 percent of popular vote. This deprived it of the position of the main opposition party in Bihar which went to the BJP which won 40 assembly seats, which was a gain of just one seat compared to 1990 assembly election in which it got 39 seats.

Right from the beginning, the net Congress loss has been the Janata Dal's gain in Bihar. The changing political scene in Bihar had a profound impact on the social structure as well. Traditionally, Congress rule meant rule by one of the four upper castes, Bhumihars, Brahmins, Rajput and Kayasthas, who together comprise only 13 percent of the population.

But the formation of Janata Dal saw new social groups rising to power in the state. The new formation was made U.P. largely of the other backward classes, mainly Yadavs, Kurmis and Koeris, in alliance with Muslims. A large segment of even the most backward castes and the schedule castes lent their supports this new formation. This formation remained unbroken until 1995 when on the eve of assembly elections. Kurmis and Koeris parted company with the larger group to form the Samata Party.

But the Janata Dal's victory in 1995 further demonstrated the assertion of the backward castes. The Samata Party fared badly and won just seven assembly seats and 6.8 percent of the popular vote.

In comparison, the BJP with 40 seats, gained the status of the opposition in the assembly for the first time and emerged as a potent challenge to the ruling party, not so much for the seats won as for the number of constituencies where it was in direct contest with the Janata Dal - as many as 80. The party retained its position in the tribal south and made inroads into north Bihar where it emerged as the main challenger to the Janata Dal. That the urban elite and a section of business men supported the BJP was evident from its victory in three of the four constituencies in Greater Patna and in industrial and trading centres of Dhanbad, Jamshedpur and Ranchi. Its victory in Darbhanga was a step towards its entry into Mithilanchal, known as an upper-caste dominated Congress (I) bastion.

But the party showed stagnation in its seat share as it increased only one seat to its earlier tally in 1990 assembly elections.

In the social composition of BJP MLAs in the Vidhan Sabha of 1990, 3 belonged to Brahmins, 3 were of Bhumihar caste, 3 of Rajput caste, five of Yadavs and 6 belonged to Harijans. In 1995 assembly, BJP MLA's social composition was 2 of Yadavs, 2 of Koeris, 2 of Kurmis, 4 belonged to Rajput, 4 to Brahmins, 1 to Bhumihar, 8 to Bania and 6 to other castes.

This shows a sizeable chunk of BJP MLAs belonged to upper castes.

BJP won 10 of the Assembly seats it contested in the North Bihar. It won 11.2 percent of votes polled. The BJP was particularly strong in South Bihar region and all five of its Lok Sabha seats came from here in 1991 Lok Sabha elections. In 1995 assembly elections, out of the assembly seats won by the BJP, 21 were in this region. It won 18.4 percent of the popular vote against its state average of 13.1 percent in 1995 assembly elections. The control Bihar region generally supports the left parties. Left-Janata Dal alliance won 92

assembly seats from this region in 1995. The BJP could not prove its worth in this region.

In 1996 Lok Sabha elections in Bihar took place in a very changed situation. In this election, Janata Dal faced a formidable challenge from the BJP. The seat share it got in 1991 could not be maintained in 1996.

The political developments in Bihar resulted in the formation of three political fronts in Bihar. The Congress with some seat adjustments with Jharkhand Mukthi Morcha (Soren) represented one front and the Janata Dal with its traditional alliances with CPI and CPI(M) represented the second front.

A third front was then fast emerging around the BJP. The Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) of Chandrasekhar and the Bihar Peoples Party (BPP) of Anand Mohan Singh merged with the Samata Party made seat adjustments with the BJP. This alliance of Samata Party with the BJP as its axis, was then becoming the rallying point of the forces opposed to Laloo Prasad Yadav in the state.

BJP was thus recognized as the only alternative force. The alliance with the Samata Party raised new hopes among the anti- Laloo Prasad forces. The upper castes that earlier voted for the Congress were fast moving towards the BJP. The Samata Party has good following among Kurmis and Koeris who comprise about 3.6 and 4.1 percent of the population respectively whereas the BPP of Anand Mohan Singh had some base among Rajputs of Bihar who constitute about 4.2 percent of the population.

The Congress on the other hand was ready to light a loosing battle. Its miserable performance in the last Assembly and Lok Sabha elections and the rumblings at the national level left it in a deplorable situation.

Before this election in 1996 the BJP and Samata Party alliance witnessed a process of re-grouping among upper castes and a section of backward and most backward castes who fell with Yadav dominated Janata Dal in BIHAR. This alliance was all set to give a severe jolt to Janata Dal in Bihar in the 1996 Lok Sabha elections.

The ruling Janata Dal and its Left allies, which won 38 of the 54 Lok Sabha seats in the 1991 Parliamentary elections and nearly 190 of the 324 assembly seats in 1995 suffered a setback. The Janata Dal this time won 21 and its left ally CPI only four, Congress (I) somehow managed to bag two seats.

The performance of the BJP which fought the election in alliance with the Samata Party was a matter of surprise in the state politics. These parties which were virtually rooted in the 1995 Assembly elections won nearly half the Lok Sabha seats in 1996 election.

The BJP won 18 Lok Sabha seats and its ally Samata party won six totaling 24 seats which was more than the Janata Dal's seat share. The swing of the popular votes towards the alliance of BJP and Samata exploded the myth that Laloo Prasad Yadav's Yadav-Muslim-Dalit vote bank was unshakable.

Apart from upsetting the Janata Dal's calculations, the saffron brigade made a successful foray into the tribal dominated Chhotanagpur - Santhal Parganas in South Bihar, winning 13 of the 14 seats in the region. The reasons for its success in this region were: a disgraced JMM (S), popular discontent over the lack of development activity in the Jharkhand region of Southern Bihar the failures of the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council (JAAC) and the BJP's promise of a separate "Vananchal comprising tribal areas. The BJP supported by the Vanabasi Kalyan Kendra a social organisation floated by the RSS promised to create a "Vananchal" covering 18 districts in Southern Bihar, a promise that had a great appeal among the tribals.

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The BJP-Samata combine also won key constituencies of the North region: Bagaha, Bettiah, Motihari, Shoepur, Maharajgunj, Sheohar and Chapra.

The alliance succeeded in winning over not only the forward castes but also the Kurmis, Koeris, tribals and people belonging to some of the extremely backward castes. This was the reason why it did uniformly well in constituencies with a large proportion of upper caste voters like Sheohar and Maharajgunj and those dominated by backward classes (Sasaram, Motihari and Nalanda).

After an analysis of elections of 90s in Bihar, it is very much evident that BJP in the state political and electoral context could not succeed in channelising the Hindutva upsurge engineered by it in the wake of Ayodhya agitation as it did successfully in the Uttar Pradesh.

Although, it succeeded in taking the Congress (I) position in the Bihar's state politics, but it could not make much dents into the Janata Dal and left combine's political support base under their social justice platform which revolved around the Mandal issue.

The reason was that the tremors of BJP's engineered communal polarisation around Mandir issue were very mild in Bihar as compared to the Uttar Pradesh. Because as the original site of Ayodhya issue was in U.P. it succeeded in creating a big saffron surge to enhance its own electoral prospects in the state.

BJP's communal appeal could not make substantial gains in a highly caste-polarised state of Bihar. Though, it succeeded in improving its electoral prospects and expanding its social support base, but it got stagnated after much of the Hindutva rhetoric lost its appeal.

It was only in 1996 Loksabha elections in Bihar that it performed tremendously. This was because a tactical shift in its alignment. Quite stagnated into a caste divided society, it rather tried to enter into coalitional logic and to make alliances with those parties having specific rural-social groups. Its alliance with Samata Party based on Koeris and Kurmi's. two powerful rural categories in Bihar after the Yadavs helped it immensely and thus its tremendous show in the 1996 Lok Sabha elections in Bihar.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In post Independent India, the party system was characterized as one party dominance system. The Indian National Congress dominated the overall political and electoral scene. This system of dominant party was also evident in the state politics in India. This continued uptill 1967. The break with one party dominance system resulted in the emergence of other political formations. Most of these actually came out as factions of Congress Party itself. The Communist party of India and Baratiya Jana Sangh were the two parties that emerged on the political scene independent of the Congress Party.

The period from 1967 onwards witnessed the growth of political parties in the Indian states on the basis of castes (U.P.) religion (Punjab) culture, (T.N.) and ideology. The anti-Congressism of Lohia expressed itself in the SVD governments in more than half of the states of India. What had happened in 1957 with CPI government in Kerala in terms of anti-Congressism appeared to be repeating itself on a larger geographical and political landscape of the country. This development did not challenge the one party dominant system at the centre which led many scholars to believe that a two party system was emerging in the states. One could see that in U.P. and Bihar where the intermediate castes like Jats Yadvas Kurmis and Koris were beginning to assert themselves could come to the stage of if not anti-Congressism but certainly the politics of non-Congressism.

The subsequent developments in the states saw however the establishment of Congress regimes. At the same time some regional parties came to stay.

W. Bengal and Kerala symbolise a persistent competitive dualist system. In Tamil Nadu (TN) and Punjab, Akalis with or without BJP have provided the alternative as the DMK had done it in T.N.

The crucial change in the India party system came in 1977 in the wake of anti-emergency movements in which a number of political parties came together and formed the Janata Party to defeat the Congress Party unitedly. In 1977 parliamentary elections, Janata party a coalition of different political parties captured majority of seats and formed the government at the Centre. The Congress Party was routed in the elections. The formation of government at the center by Janata party was the first instance of a non-Congress government at the centre in the political history of Independent India. But this Janata experiment could not survive long. Within two years of its rule, it faced defections and internal infighting due to personal ambitions of some of the leaders of its constituent parties. Charan Singh came out of the Janata coalition and stacked the claim to form the government with the outside support of Congress Party. The other issue which led to the collapse of Janata party was the issue of dual membership of Bharatiya Jana Sangh leaders with RSS which was one of the most cohesive group in the coalition.

This experiment again found a strong political expression in 1989, when Janata Dal was launched by V.P. Singh which was a representative of the rump Janata Party. In 1989 also, a non Congress government was formed by displacing the Congress at the centre. This time a strong anti corruption wave worked in the logic of Indian politics. The National Front constituted of national and regional parties formed the government at the centre with the outside support of BJP and Left Front. This experiment too could nor survive very long. The spell of National Front government in which the Janata Dal was a powerful ally came to an and due to defection of Chandrasekhar group and the withdraw of support by the BJP. This withdrawal of support by BJP to NF Government came in the wake of two issue which gripped the whole country i.e. the Ayodhya mosque issue and Mandal issue. The BJP's withdrawal of support to NF government was the result of V.P. Singh decision to implement the Mandal Commission report, providing 27% reservation to the backward castes and the decision of the Janata

Dal government (headed by Laloo Prasad Yadav) in Bihar to stop the L.K. Advani's Ayodhya rath-yatra in Bihar.

The three northern Hindi speaking states of Himachal Pradesh Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan represent the competitive two party system in which Congress and BJP are the two principal parties. In the 1991 Lok Sabha elections, the vote-shares of Congress and the BJP were quite close in each state and the combined vote shares of the two parties were between 84.9 and 89 per cent. Since then, they have stuck to this position.

The competitive multi-party system is evident in Gujarat, Karnataka and Orissa and in Haryana, U.P. and Bihar. In these states inter party competition is dominated by three forces: Congress, Janata Dal and its fragments and the BJP.

For our own purpose, the states of U.P. and Bihar are important. The shifts which have taken place in the Indian party system as well as in the state party system provide greater space for other political parties to emerge in the state politics. In the case of U.P. and Bihar, it is however the BJP and the various Janata formations, mainly the Janata Dal in Bihar and Samajwadi Party (a rump of erstwhile Janata Dal) and its allies in U.P. which have benefited the most at the cost of the collapse of Congress Party in these states. BJP became a ruling party in 1991 in U.P. and maintains the status of single largest party. In Bihar, it has replaced the Congress Party as the principal opposition party in the state assembly and comes second after Janata Dal and its allies in the electoral politics of the state.

In the sub-regions of these states also, BJP remains the principal contestant with other political parties in every region. In U.P. Uttarakhand region represents a dualist pattern of party competition in which BJP and Congress are two main competitors. In West U.P. and Eastern region BJP is locked up in political and electoral fight with the Samajwadi Party and the allies. In the Central plain

region and Bundelkhand, it has overwhelming presence superseding both the Congress and Janata allies.

In the case of Bihar, as the recent 1996 parliamentary elections show, the BJP is the principal party in South Bihar. It has achieved this status mainly at the cost of Congress Party and the various Jharkhand political factions in this region. In central Bihar, BJP with its ally Samata Party gives tough political fight to Janata Dal and a marginalised Congress Party. In North Bihar, where once Congress and then Janata Dal reigned supreme, BJP has succeeded in making inroads into many politically important constituencies. It has now entered into even Mithila region once considered as the bastion of Congress Party. The socio-economic, demographic and political character of U.P. and Bihar have been discussed in Chapter II.

The growth of BJP's political trajectory has followed a some what similar pattern in both U.P. and Bihar. This was most evident uptill the end of 1980s. In both these states, its predecessor party BJS had very marginal presence. It could not make much dents into Congress dominated system and was combined to the periphery of the state politics. The break for it came only when Congress system faced gradual decline in these states by 1967. The trend of a gradual collapse of Congress system paved the way of other political formations based on specific social constituencies who basically came out of the Congress umbrella. The emergency of other political parties created much space for the alliance and coalitions among them BJP very shrewdly understood this emergent situation and tactfully exploited it. It entered into the logic of coalitional politics and made alliance with non-Congress parties to improve its own electoral prospects in these states. In 1967, in both U.P. and Bihar it made substantial electoral gains and even had ministerial experiences in Charan Singh ministry and Mahamaya Prasad ministry in U.P. and Bihar respectively. Both these ministeries in U.P. and Bihar were actually the result of the decline the Congress Party in state

politics. Thus, BJS made these initial successes in U.P. and Bihar by exploiting the actual shifts taking place in the party situations of these two states.

In both these states, from the onset, BJS's social support base and leadership were confined to limited constituencies of merchants, shopkeepers and businessmen in the towns. It was then often described as the "shopkeepers party". By the 1967, it attempted to transcend this limited constituency and made inroads into the rural bases of Congress Party. The conservative upper castes especially the land lords among them in the countryside shifted their loyalty from Congress to BJS. It also drew support in some areas from middle and rich peasant groups in the countryside. Although, it drew support from middle status cultivating castes in some areas, its dominant leadership generally came from the elite castes, particularly the Brahmans and the Rajputs.

In mid-70s also, it greatly influenced the then ongoing discussion on the alliance politics to give a tough electoral fight to the Congress Party. It became an important ally in the Janata coalition of 1977. It was also the most cohesive group both organizationally and ideologically in the Janata party.

By mid 1980s BJP had a very changed political trajectory. Although, almost eclipsed in 1984 elections, it again improved its electoral graph by making alliance with the Janata Dal (a representative of the rump Janata formations) in 1989 elections. Here again, the improvement in its political and electoral prospects was mainly due to its alliance tactics.

Thus 1967, 1977 and 1989 represent three crucial moments in the history of the BJP and the Indian politics as well. The three phases actually represent broad. Political space for the possibilities of coalitional politics. Simultaneously, these three phases also represent the political and electoral collapse of the Congress Party.

Thus, the decline of Congress Party and the subsequent possibility of politics of alliance provided a big political space for the emergence of BJP.

BJP's political journey by the end of 80s took a new turn. It severed its link with the Janata Dal and the allies and chose an independent route to power. The Ayodhya strategy provided the biggest help in this endeavor. The contentious issue of Mandir-Masjid at Ayodhya unleashed many forces and channels of communal mobilization. Other Hindutva militant organizational like VHP, Bajrang Dal and naturally the RSS worked as its corollaries in advancing its own political and electoral fortunes. The communal mobilization ground Ayodhya issue and actual shifts in the party situations helped it to emerge as a big force on the political scene.

This case was special in U.P. where the Ayodhya agitation was the most intense compared to other states in India. But, BJP could not maintain a consistent pattern of growth in U.P. politics. After a brief spell of rule in U.P. in 1991, it could not make much headway. In a situation of intense caste polarization around Mandal issue, its communitarian ideology and communal mobilization found its own limitations. In 1993 state assembly elections, BJP lost out to a powerful combination of backward castes, dalits and Muslims in post-Mandal phase characterized by Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance in U.P. After that, its has stuck to stagnant political position by maintaining above 30 per cent of vote shares. There is no considerable change in its seat share too, but still, it maintains the position of single largest party in U.P.

In Bihar, although its strategy of communal mobilisation around Ayodhya issue paid some initial dividends but it failed to make chinks in the Janata Dal armoury of "social justice platform" based on the support-base of backward castes dalits and Muslims. In the beginning, Ayodhya agitation in Bihar's towns and villages did help it in making its political presence felt but in pure electoral terms it could not succeed like in U.P. Hence in Bihar Janata Dal under the charismatic leadership of Laloo Prasad Yadav succeeded in wielding together the backward casts dalits and Muslims. The problem for Janata Dal started in Bihar when it faced infightings and defection. With the formation of Samata Party, a



breakaway groups of Janata Dal and specifically based on the support base of powerful middle castes Kurmis and Koeris. Janata Dal faced fracture in its social justice platform.

The setback came when BJP aligned itself with the Samata Party to broaden its social support base. This alliance representing the uppercastes support base of BJP and some backward castes who fell away with Janata Dal gave a big blow to Janata Dal in 1996 parliamentary elections. In South Bihar, BJP emerged as the single largest party winning 13 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the region. In central Bihar its alliance partner gave severe jolt to Janata Dal. And in the north Bihar, the BJP-Samata alliance checkmated the reigning Janata Dal.

Thus, in both the cases of U.P. and Bihar, what we find is that after initial gains out of its Ayodhya agitation and mobilization, it was checkmated by the powerful coalition of backward castes, dalits, and Muslims. During this period, it faced much difficulty in increasing its electoral prospects further. This difficulty has brought a change in its strategy in both the states. With the breakdown of the Mandal platform represented by various Janata fragments in U.P. and Bihar, there is a tactical shift on the part of BJP to rope in alliances with those political parties who represent the specific caste groups. The decision to support BSP government in both 1994 and 1997 in U.P. and its alliance with Samata Party in Bihar provide a testimony to this tactical shift.

This trend is also visible in other parts of the country as well. In Haryana, it entered into an alliance with Haryana Vikas Party (HVP) representing the powerful rural caste in the state. In Punjab, it is in alliance with the Akali Dal with an intention to improve its image among the powerful rural social groups in the state.

It is for the future researchers to study this tactical shift in BJP's strategy and to know about how far it has benefited it in these states. But, in the case of U.P. and Bihar, it is very clear that it is desperate (especially after Mandal polarization and waning of its own communitarian ideology) to make alliances with the political parties representing specific rural caste groups.

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