

**THE SAMAJWADI PARTY
IDEOLOGY, STRATEGY AND SOCIAL BASE**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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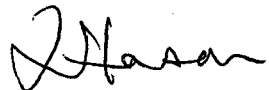
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ABBREVIATIONS

AGP	-	Assom Gana Parishad
AIADMK	-	All India Anna Dravid Munnetra Kazgham
BJP	-	Bhartiya Janata Party
BJS	-	Bhartiya Jana Sangh
BKD	-	Bhartiya Kranti Dal
BLD	-	Bhartiya Lok Dal
BSP	-	Bahujan Samaj Party
CPI	-	Communist Party of India
INC	-	Indian National Congress
INLD	-	Indian National Lok Dal
JD	-	Janata Dal
LD	-	Lok Dal
MLA	-	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	-	Member of Parliament
PSP	-	Praja Socialist Party
RJD	-	Rashtriya Janata Dal
RLD	-	Rashtriya Lok Dal
SJP	-	Samajwadi Janata Party
SSP	-	Samyukta Socialist Party
SVD	-	Samyukta Vidhayak Dal
TDP	-	Telugu Desam Party
VHP	-	Vishwa Hindu Parishad

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CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A significant development in the 1990's is the emergence of states as a key arena of political competition. State has come to occupy central position in the national politics. The constitution established the federal structure for the Indian state but as our independence was accompanied by the partition, at that time regionalism was regarded as an expression of anti-nationalist sentiments. Members of the Constituent Assembly and all other important leaders were in favour of the strong centre, that unity and integrity of the country could be maintained. As a result, though federalism was adopted for the country, but centre's domination over the states remained. The Congress system or single party rule further weakened the role of the state and led to a situation where states played only peripheral role in national politics.

The Indian party system has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last decade, which includes the following developments: - 1) the single most important development in this period has been the decline of the Congress. The 1990s have witnessed the collapse of one party dominant Congress system. 2) Trend towards federalization of the one party system. It made its presence felt at the centre for the first time with the National Front Government in 1989. 3) This period saw a sharp rise in political mobilization based on social cleavages, on ascriptive identities in particular of religion and caste. Hindutva forces were not able to fulfill the space left by the Congress. As a result, the spectrum of communities, class clusters and classes that was once parts of the Congress political system have often found voice through other parties¹.

Yogendra Yadav says that in the social and political churning that India went through during this period several dormant social identities acquired a new salience in the context of electoral competition. He terms it as the "third electoral system"². Congress

¹ Rangrajan, Mahesh, *Federal Pressures*, Seminar no.480,1999,pp.26-30

² Yadav, Yogendra, *The Third Electoral System*, Seminar no.480,1999,pp14-26

was no longer the pole against which every political formation was defined. The constraint on the voter to vote for or against it was no longer there. Three forces occupied the political space: the Congress, BJP, and others. The third space became the spring of political alternatives³.

James Manor identified two themes in Indian politics to explain the changes in the parties and party system of India during this period, namely democratization and decay⁴. According to him, as people at all levels of society became increasingly aware of the logic of electoral politics, a new awakening occurred among the great mass of India's voter. They become more assertive and their expectations from politicians grew. This period also saw a decline in the capacity of leadership to respond to pressures from society. Crisis of strong leadership led to the decay of the political parties that combined to generate two major tendencies: 1) the way the elections were won or lost. A change from the days before 1972, when an incumbent at the state or national level usually won re-elections, to a period in which they usually lost; anti incumbency become a common trend and 2) growing divergence between the logic of politics at the national level and the logic of politics in various state-level arenas⁵. Thus, this period was marked by greater competition among parties and by greater instability within many parties. It was a time characterized by abundant alternation between parties in power at the state and national level, by continued decay and fragmentation within parties and by a tendency towards personalized control of parties.

The emergence of state parties is regarded as an outcome of the dominant and hegemonic role played by the Congress Party at the centre. Over centralization ultimately results in the federalization of the system, symbolizes by the rise of new regional and state based parties.

The leaders who founded regional parties claimed that the national parties in India

³ ibid

⁴ Manor, James, Parties and Party System in Hasan, Zoya ,ed. *Parties and Party Politics in India*, New Delhi,OUP,pp432-474

⁵ Suri,k.C.,*Parties UnderPressure*,<http://www.lokniti.org/wpf-1.pdf>,pp.14-15

did not give due importance to regional aspiration, if not neglecting such aspirations altogether. Hence the need for regional parties. During its rule, the Congress, usually appointed person close to the High Command as the state Chief Minister, and sometimes important state leaders were ignored by the party. This was an attempt to centralize power⁶. However, hurt or alienated popular leaders of the states, left the Congress, to join other parties or to form new parties.

The 1990s have witnessed the collapse of the one-party dominant Congress system and a transition towards a new “region-based” multi party system in which state and national party systems interact with each other in a complex manner.

Thus, at the centre of the transformation is the decline of the Congress system after four decades of dominating position in the national as well as state politics. Mandir-Masjid issue resulted in the re-alignment of political parties, along state, sub-state and caste- religion lines. Although, regionalization was introduced up to some extent in 1969, the 1989 elections were the turning point, which provided state politics a new dimension and unique combination of national and state parties working together for national governance. The 1989 elections were followed by the rise of the BJP and other state parties and an era of coalition governance begin. Mergers, alliances and breakups followed emergences of new state parties. The caste and class cluster that were once part of the Congress finally found a voice through other state based parties. These changes were result of specific social and political conditions prevailing in the state at that time, leading to the growth of regional parties; having their own views for social transformation with distinct agenda for it.

A particularly interesting trend in this period is the emergence of a bifurcated pattern in the party system- in which the state pattern of conflict and competition is significantly different from the national pattern. Through the 1970s and 1980s, people voted in state assembly elections, as if they were electing a Prime Minister. The 1990s have seen a radical shift in this respect. Political loyalties, opinions and even social

⁶ ibid

identities are now chosen at the level of the state. People now vote in the parliamentary elections as if they are choosing a state government. State specific electoral verdicts, the rise of statewide parties and the emergence of statewide jati or varna clusters as effective categories of electoral mobilization.⁷

Along with this, the rise of state parties has changed the nature of political alternatives. Parties like the Samajwadi Party, Samata Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, or the Trinamool Congress are not cast in the same mould as the classical regional parties like the Akali Dal or the Dravid Munnetra Kazgham(DMK) or the Telgu Desam Party(TDP). Their political presence is state specific but their political vision is not. Each of these would go out of their way to claim that they are a national party and through this process, three principal changes are in progress: Centre is not pre-eminent in the way it was during the Congress rule; there has been a growth in the power of state government and an increased role of states in national policy making⁸, for e.g. in the year 1998, the direct support of state parties has enabled the formation of the BJP led government in the New Delhi, but also more crucially, facilitated the process of acceptability of the BJP/RSS in the political mainstream⁹.

Followed by the liberalization, the states have more financial autonomy. Liberalization provided the states enough space to manage their financial affairs and even encouraged them to negotiate with other countries for technological expertise and financial aid¹⁰.

The rise of the states as the political battleground, along with the changes in the field of the representation and ideology the issue of leadership and organization become more important. As regional and state parties are generally based on the ideology of one man with defined territorial representation, their entire working depends on the leader's

⁷ Saha, Anindya, *The Indian Party System 1989-99*, Seminar 480, August, 1999, pp.21-25.

⁸ Prakash, Amit, *Social, Cultural and Economic Dimensions of the Party System* in Mehra Ajay, Kueck W. Gert, Khanna, D.D.ed. *Political Parties and Party System*, New Delhi, Sage 2001, pp. 40-50.

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ Pai, Sudha, *State Politics: New Dimensions, Party System, Liberalization, and Politics of Identity*, New Delhi, Shipra Publications, 2000, pp78

choice. Hence, these formations are characterized by the lack of intra-party democracy, ad-hoc organization and charismatic leadership.

At the same time, the sharpness of the claims has strengthened based on an emotive appeal, the projection of one leader in a more or less populist demagogic style. In case of many state level parties, this is evident. Many state level parties are single leader parties without substantial organizational network¹¹. The lack of organization has compensated by the projection of leaders as the demigod, in the process of making any kind of institutionalization more and more difficult.

The course of politics in U.P in the last decade to an extent represents what is happening in Indian politics as a whole. No other state has seen as such a fragmentation of the society and the polity as U.P. has since the beginning of the 1990s.

Politics in UP is the mirror of the Indian political system. Its importance and influence in the national politics with 80 parliamentary seats is indisputable. It was for the first time in 1967 that one-party dominance enjoyed by the Congress received the setback in Uttar Pradesh. Again, in 1977, Congress government was thrown out of power but due to lack of strong leadership in opposition, Congress enjoyed power in the state until 1989.

The 1989 elections brought about a radical change in UP politics. It created several upheavals and started a democratization process at the grass root level; with increasing voter awareness due to the issues like reservation, the Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir controversy etc. While the saffronization of the electoral politics benefited the BJP, war against 'Hindutva' forces was spearheaded by the Samajwadi Party with its agenda for implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations. Bahujan Samaj Party was emerged as a party for Dalits. All the three parties emerged as the main players in the power game. With marginalized Congress, they ultimately determined the

¹¹ Sreedharan, E., *The Fragmentation of the Indian Party system, 1952-1999: some competing explanation* in Hasan, Zoya ed. *Parties and Party Politics in Indian*, New Delhi, OUP, 2002, pp. 475-503.

fate of Uttar Pradesh politics.

With special reference to the state parties in the politics of Uttar Pradesh, the present study is an analysis of the Samajwadi Party. The emergence of the Samajwadi Party and subsequent widening up of its ideological, social and political base. The study also aims to find the strategic moves of the party and electoral performances.

Objective and Scope of the Study

- 1) To understand origin and ideology of the Samajwadi Party and focus on the recent shifts in party's ideology.
- 2) To examine the political strategy of the Samajwadi Party.
- 3) To focus upon the social base of the Samajwadi Party and analyze reasons behind the changing nature of party's social base.
- 4) To analyze party's social base of in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections with special reference to caste, religion and regions present in the state.

The study aims at covering different socio-political dimensions and politics of the Samajwadi Party government since its inception in UP in 1992.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, these are:

1. Introduction
2. Samajwadi Party: Emergence and Ideology
3. Expansion and Strategy of the Samajwadi Party
4. The Samajwadi Party: Social base and Electoral Analysis.
5. Conclusion

The second chapter attempts to explain and analyze the emergence and ideology of the party. This chapter essentially is a historical review of the SP, which attempts to provide a historical backdrop followed by the discussion of ideological foundations of the party and recent shifts in it.

The third chapter is about the development of the party and its strategy. This chapter aims at discussing Samajwadi Party's response to the important issues like reservation.

The fourth chapter deals with the question of how far SP has consolidated its social base in multi-dimensional culture of the state. This chapter also offers an analysis of electoral performances of the party during national and state assembly elections.

The concluding chapter is a brief summary of the entire study, an account of the findings and suggestions to improve the performance of the SP.

Methodology

In this study, the descriptive, analytical, historical and statistical methods have been used. The study is based on the primary and secondary materials available. Primary sources utilized for the work included party manifestoes and other publications, publications by the State Information and Broadcasting Ministry, writings by party leaders and the official website of the Samajwadi Party. Most of the primary sources are utilized after translating them from Hindi to English. Secondary sources utilized are books on the UP politics, articles and data published in the journals, magazines, newspapers reports and editorials.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER II

SAMAJWADI PARTY- EMERGENCE AND IDEOLOGY

Samajwadi Party is the representative of the socialist tradition in the Indian politics and most successful offshoot of the socialist movement led by Jaya Prakash Narayana, Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev. It represents a long history of non-Congressism and oppositional unity in Indian politics. Along with socialism and non-Congressism, it is also regarded as an inheritor of the backward caste movement in north India and to some extent Charan Singh's legacy of political mobilization.

In its attempt to understand emergence and ideology of the Samajwadi Party this chapter at first traces the socialist politics in Uttar Pradesh and how Mulayam Singh Yadav became a prominent figure in the state politics and formed the Samajwadi Party. The chapter also attempts to explain party's ideological background, its stand on various issues and changes taking place in its ideology.

SOCIALIST POLITICS IN UTTAR PRADESH-

The history of socialist formations has been that of splits and mergers as well as constant changes in nomenclature. They separated and merged to form the Praja Socialist Party, Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist Party and again Socialist Party¹.

During 1952-67, the socialist parties did show sign of strength, however; the in-fighting over small issues and factionalism harmed the socialist movement in Uttar Pradesh led by Jaya Prakash Narayan, Lohia and Acharya Kriplani. The Socialist Party and Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party of Acharya Kriplani fought elections separately in 1952, but merged together to form Praja Socialist Party [PSP] but the party suffered a split again in 1955 and a new party

¹ Kumar, Ketkar, *Pro-OBC means anti-congress*, <http://in.news.yahoo.com>.

Socialist Party [Lohia] was formed². The two socialist groups- Socialist Party [Lohia] and the PSP- merged in UP in 1962 to form a United Socialist Party in the legislative assembly and ultimately Samyukta Socialist Party [SSP] was formed at the national level in 1964. In 1965, PSP again established its separate identity and the socialist movement again suffered a set back in Uttar Pradesh. In assembly election PSP lost seats consecutively in 1962 and 1967. The Communist Party of India did put up some fight in UP, but degenerated after 1967 elections.

By 1967, the Congress lost its position of pre-eminence and two main opposition forces occupied the space created by the declining influence of the Congress: the Socialist and the Jana Sangha. Both opposition parties were fairly well spread throughout the state. The Jana Sangha exerted influence in the towns and among the trading class whereas the socialist ideology enjoyed popularity among small town intelligentsia especially Hindi educated people. During this period, socialists spearheaded the opposition.

Non-Congressism forming the core of Lohia politics was the main inspiration behind oppositional alliances and coalition. 1967 onwards socialists attached great weight to social issues such as Hindi and reservations for OBCs. They were in the vanguard of Hindi politics in the state, which gave them an advantage in securing the support of the middle class³.

Since, the fourth general elections in 1967, some fragmentation of the electorate in UP took place on class lines under the leadership of Charan Singh who engineered defection from the Congress and formed a new political party, the Bhartiya kranti dal [BKD] in November, 1967 by coalescing the Jan Congress [Charan Singh -UP], Jan Kranti Dal [Kamakya Narayan Singh – Bihar], Bangla Congress [Atulya Ghosh-West Bengal] and Jan Congress [Orissa and MP].

² Tyagi, K.G., *Party and Party Politics in India: A Study of SSP*, Delhi, Ajanta Publications, 1994, pp.8-10

³ Hasan, Zoya, *Quest for Power: oppositional movement and post-congress politics in UP*, New Delhi, OUP, 1998, pp17-18.

UP experienced a different pattern of social mobilization. The state served as a battleground for two conflicting mobilization strategies, each of which in its own way politically strengthened the lower castes. While the Lohiaite socialists promoted affirmative action programmes, Charan Singh evolved a different approach by focusing on the defence of the peasants as an identifiable group – the Kisan⁴. However, his agrarian concern found greater support in his own caste group – the Jats, BKD tried to develop a coalition of rich middle castes in western UP and the less developed backward castes in the eastern region.

BKD formed government in the Uttar Pradesh with the support of Socialist, Left and Jana Sangh as Samyukta Vidhayak Dal. This was the first non-Congress government in the state under the leadership of Charan Singh. However, the new experiment did not last long. Used to oppositional, agitation politics, and factionalism, the various component parts began to threaten to pull the government down if they did not have their way⁵. In February 1968, the experiment broke down. However, it did show that a united opposition could provide an alternative pattern of government, working at its best.

Mulayam Singh Yadav a disciple of Ram Manohar Lohia was a part of this experiment in consensus from the start. He won a seat in the Vidhan Sabha for the first time in 1967. At 27, he was the youngest MLA in the Assembly. He emerged as an able organizer, as man of action. His ability to work at the grassroots and their manipulation made him elect on the SSP ticket, but by the time the government fell, Ram Manohar Lohia was dead. He chose to join Charan Singh as the most credible leader of the Jats and Backwards.

Uttar Pradesh went to mid-term poll in 1969. The Congress marginally improved its position but all the other parties of national level – BJS, SSP, PSP, CPI, Swatantra Party – suffered severe recesses except Bhartiya Kranti Dal [BKD] – a regional formation, which stood second and became main opposition party in the assembly.

⁴ Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Rise of OBC in the Hindi Belt*, Journal of Asian Studies, 59(1), 2000, pp148.

⁵ Wright, Gillian, *The Decline of Congress and Rise of Mulayam*, Seminar no. 432, Aug 1995, pp.20.

After 1969, Charan Singh tried to broad-base the party by negotiating a merger with Samyukta Socialist Party, which had a strong support base among the backwards-especially Yadavs leading to the formation of Bhartiya Lok Dal. The BLD represented the landed peasantry; and through the efforts of this party, class-cleavages in UP electorate acquired some sharpness. Charan Singh with the help of his strategy of social mobilization under the AJGAR [Ahirs, Jats, Gujjars, Rajputs] forged a formidable alliance between the Jats and the Yadavs under a common platform of Bhartiya Lok Dal.

After 1971 elections, Congress ministry was formed in the state and it hence; ruled the state till 1977.

THE RISE OF MULAYAM SINGH IN UP POLITICS

The June 1977 assembly elections, held against the backdrop emergency and the excesses committed by the Congress government, proved to be disastrous for the Congress. The major reason behind the Janata Dal success was the emergency, imposed under the Congress rule. The main strength behind this success was their unity as well as the fact that some Congressmen such as Jagjivan Ram and H.N. Bahuguna left the Congress on the eve of the elections.

However, unity among the opposition parties was short-lived, and their lack of cohesiveness, paved the way for return of Congress to power not only at the centre but also in the state elections. The coalition experiment was again a failure and in 1980 elections were again held in the state. The Janata Party had completely disintegrated and became a non-entity in this election. The only component of this party worth the name was the Janata Dal [Secular] led by Charan Singh.

As the Congress prepared to fall, Mulayam Singh Yadav, began to rise. He had been minister for Cooperation and Animal Husbandry in the Janata Party government. After the government collapsed, he stayed with Charan Singh, being his deputy in the Lok Dal. He served as leader of opposition in both the upper and lower

houses of the UP legislature. He fought VP Singh, then the Congress Chief Minister, over the killing of hundreds of backwards in police drive against dacoits. He campaigned for implementing the Mandal Commission recommendation through out the 1980s and for opposition unity especially after 1987⁶. In 1985 assembly elections, the Congress again emerged as the largest party. Other parties like the BJP and the Janata Party were marginalized.

Meanwhile the emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] in the politics of Uttar Pradesh represented the consolidation of the schedule castes- who once constituted a very strong vote bank of the Congress. The Brahmins too broke away from the Congress and largely shifted to the BJP, later Ayodhya episode helped to consolidate the Brahmins vote for the BJP. The intermediary castes- called the other backward castes [OBCs], mainly including the Yadavs, Kurmis, koeris etc. started consolidating and rallying around the personality of Mulayam Singh Yadav, socialist of Lohia group. Besides the caste fragmentation, the Congress also suffered the communal fragmentation in its vote bank; the Muslims in UP suddenly found a new saviour in Mulayam Singh Yadav and lent strong support to him.

After the death of Charan Singh, the leadership rivalry between his son Ajit Singh and the then leader of the LD in UP Assembly; Mulayam Singh Yadav, led to the decline and the eventual split in the LD. Mulayam Singh's faction, the Lok Dal (B), scored over Ajit Singh. The former retained the loyalty of western UP prosperous Jats and latter pursued to capture middle, lower peasantry and the backward castes.

Mulayam Singh came from a Lohiaite socialist tradition of the SSP and sought to construct a quite different collective identity for the purpose of electoral mobilization from that which characterized the practice of the LD⁷. His strategy was to revive the Lohiaite practice of alliances both with Dalits communities and organizations and with Muslims placing a far greater emphasis on the collective identity of backward classes, excluding the Jats, than the Lok Dal had ever done⁸.

⁶ Tripathi,,R.P, *Mulayam Singh: Rachna aur Sangharsh*, Lucknow, Lohia Trust, 1993, pp. 29.

⁷ Duncan, Ian, *Agricultural Innovation and Political Change in North India – The Lok Dal in UP*, The Journal of Peasant Studies, vol 24, no.4, July 1997, pp.250.

⁸ Duncan, Ian, *New Political Equation In North India, Mayawati, Mulayam and Government Stability in UP*, Asian Survey, vol 37, no.10, 10 oct.1997, pp. 262

The decline, first of the Congress and, then of the LD-JD space led to the emergence of the BJP, the SP and the BSP as distinct political formations. Some analysts have argued that the rise of Hindutva obstructed the consolidation of rural interests into effective electoral segment.⁹

Mulayam Singh had a definite role to play in the decline of the Congress¹⁰. Firstly, he orchestrated the 1989 Janata Dal campaign in the state that brought the party to power. He was thus, easily elected as a Chief Minister. Secondly, when the Janata Dal split in 1990, he formed a minority government – with just 121 MLAs- with the Congress support. At the same time, he issued an ordinance implementing the Mandal Commission recommendations and continued to take an aggressively secular stand on the temple issue. Thirdly, Mulayam Singh's consistent stand won over Muslims and gave them another alternative to voting the Congress.

During 1989, assembly elections in the state, Mulayam Singh's LD [B] merged with the JD and it stunned everyone by its performance. It got 208 assembly seats with 29.7% votes, BJP came second and Congress got marginalized up to a great extent. After 1989 election, Mulayam Singh Yadav became Chief Minister of UP but when the JD split at the all- India level in 1990, Mulayam Singh chose to part ways with V.P Singh and joined the faction led by Chandrashekar, the Samajwadi Janata Party[SJP] and later formed Samajwadi Party.

Inside the Samajwadi Janata Party, relations between Chandrashekar and Mulayam Singh were not smooth and finally Mulayam Singh decided to part his ways with Chandrashekar and launched his own Samajwadi Party. The relationship between Mulayam Singh and Chandrashekar had always been an uneasy one. Mulayam Singh could never see him as a second rung leader.

Chandrashekar's mainstay in Uttar Pradesh politics was based on his support among the Rajputs of eastern UP and he knew that he could never play the Mandal card successfully like V P Singh; hence he supported a Rajput, Sanjay Singh against

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ Wright, Gillian, *The Decline of Congress: The Rise of Mulayam*, Seminar no. 432, Aug1995, pp22.

the Mulayam Singh's main agenda of implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendation¹¹.

The first manifestation of a similar tension between Mulayam Singh Yadav and Chandrashekhar surfaced in 1991, when the latter resigned and midterm polls were called. Mulayam Singh was expected to follow and step down, but he conveyed his resentment publicly in an official function organized on the 81st birth anniversary of Ram Manohar Lohia. He criticized Chandrashekhar for leaning on the Congress. "Taking the support of a political party is okay, but going on bended knees for their help is like going with a begging bowl," remarked Mulayam Singh Yadav in his speech¹². In 1991 state assembly, SJP was beaten in the elections. Mulayam Singh's attitude on Mandal and Mandir, and particularly the police shootings at Ayodhya on 30 November 1990, was enough to create a wave for the BJP; Muslims blamed him for splitting the Janata Dal and decided in this case that V.P. Singh's party would have a better chance of beating the BJP than Mulayam Singh and Chandrashekhar's Samajwadi Janata Party.

All these tensions finally led to the breakdown of SJP. One of the first reactions of Mulayam Singh Yadav's supporter when the split occurred was, "it is free from the burden of political deadwood and can think of coming down heavily against communal forces and the implementation of the Mandal Commission in letter and spirit"¹³.

EMERGENCE AND IDEOLOGY OF THE SAMAJWADI PARTY

The Samajwadi Party was formally launched at the two days of National Convention at Lucknow on November 4-5, 1992, with delegates from seventeen states. A new constitution was adopted which declared its commitment to the socialist ideology as advocated by Gandhi and Ram Manohar Lohia¹⁴. The delegates unanimously elected Mulayam Singh as the president of the new party.

¹¹ Singh, Ram, *Mulayam Singh: Ek Rajnaetik Jivni*, Delhi, Konark Publishers, 2000, pp.106.

¹² Ibid, pp.112.

¹³ Shafizzuman, *Samajwadi Party: A Study of its Social Base, Ideology and Leadership*, Delhi, A.P.H. Publishers, 2003, pp168

¹⁴ <http://www.samajwadiparty.org>.

After breaking away from the Samajwadi Janata Party of Chandrshekhar, Mulayam Singh Yadav had launched this new Samajwadi Party in a bid to attract old socialists of the Lohia School of thought to give his party a broad-based national character.

However Mulayam Singh's maiden launch received a setback at the very beginning when noted Socialist leaders Nagina Rai of Bihar, B.P.Pastry of Andhra Pradesh and Raghu Thakur of Madhya Pradesh refused to join hands with him and did not turn up at the convention. Prominent among those attending the convention were Hiranmoynanda and P.C.Sinha, both Ministers in Jyoti Basu-led West Bengal government, Kapil Deo Singh, Prabhu Narain Singh and Laxmi Sahu (all from Bihar), Hukum Singh, former Chief Minister of Haryana and Janeswar Misra. Former Railway Minister Hiranmoyananda, himself a leader of the Socialist Party of West Bengal, opened the convention and his colleague, Pramod Sinha of Democratic Socialist Party moved the constitution which was later adopted without any amendments. Kapil Deo Singh, the veteran follower of Lohia, designated the new party's ideology as one based on socialist ideals of Gandhi and Lohia¹⁵.

Affirming its "full faith" in the Indian Constitution, the Samajwadi Party's constitution pledged to create a socialist society and to work for secular, democratic goals. Decentralization of power both political and economic would be another objective of the party. In addition, the party would not favour any religion based political organization and would not entertain in its fold any individual from such organizations¹⁶. Apart from this, the party pledged itself for the upliftment of the Dalits, women, minorities and the backward classes in the society.

Under the backdrop of life-size portrait of Lohia, Mulayam Singh Yadav declared that his party would oppose the dangerous designs of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is trying to divide the nation on communal lines. He also termed the Congress as an anti-national party which had joined hands covertly with the Bharatiya

¹⁵ Shafizzman, *Samajwadi Party: A Study of its Social Base, Ideology and Leadership*, Delhi, A.P.H. Publishers, 2003, pp169.

¹⁶ Constitution of the Samajwadi Party—www.eci.gov.in

Janata Party and mortgaged the country's interests to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Mulayam Singh's confrontation with the saffron league earned him the esteem and gratitude of Muslims. In the process, he struck heavy blow to the vote bank of the Congress, weaning away both Muslims and backwards.

The emergence of Samajwadi Party on the political scene of Uttar Pradesh was not an accidental phenomenon. It was an offshoot of the backward class movement for regeneration and social justice.

The main factor that went into the making of this new party were the growth and sharpening of political consciousness among the OBC's in the wake of decline of Congress party dominance since 1967, assumption of leadership of these forces by some stalwarts of Congress party, like Charan Singh and Devi Lal; growing political clout of the Yadav caste in Uttar Pradesh, and emergence of Mulayam Singh as a clever and seasoned politician with close experience of politics at the grassroots. It is one of the chief beneficiaries of the Mandal upsurge in north India and a classic example of the rise and manifestation of other backward caste consciousness in Uttar Pradesh.

The ambitious Mulayam Singh realized very early the tenuous nature of his support base among the Yadav community and therefore visualized a party composed of the backwards classes with Yadavs at the core and appealing to the Dalits and Minorities. His appeal was furthered as his so-called dedication to the socialist ideals of social justice and non-Congressism. The Samajwadi Party claimed itself as the only party in UP having true concern for the Muslims and backward castes. 'The SP has been both the product of and catalyst for the political process that have been evolving in UP for quite some time, i.e. decline of the Congress'¹⁷.

¹⁷ Wright, Gillian, *The Decline of Congress: The Rise of Mulayam*, Seminar no. 432, Aug 1995, pp20.

The decline of the Congress created a political space for socially marginalized groups to move into the arena of power sharing. A historic opportunity was created and new instruments of social and political mobilization such as Samajwadi Party had occupied that space.

In the rapidly changing political scenario of the country over last fifteen years, very few players have actually retained a steady strength and Samajwadi Party is one of them. Its emergence shows rise of new political equations not only in Uttar Pradesh but also on the national front.

Ideological foundations of the Samajwadi Party

Since political parties originate in a particular milieu that is conditioned by historical, economic, cultural and others factors, it will, therefore, necessary for each party to set objectives and develop a programme of action so that objectives could be attained. Ideology is an over-all perception of political environment by a political party, which is distinct from other parties. Ideology is related to problem solving, it offers not merely a theoretical perspective or framework, but also a programme of action whereby concepts can be worked out in practice. Ideology has, therefore, a crucial role to play in party politics and political socialization.

The Samajwadi Party ideology of socialism comprises the ideals of democracy, personal freedom, nationalism, social equality, radical economic change, and decentralization of political and economic power, introduction of small-unit technology. The party like its predecessors holds that without a radical transformation of the existing order and bringing about redistributive justice, social order, peace and prosperity shall be impossible to realize¹⁸.

The Samajwadi Party is an offshoot of socialist movement; Mulayam Singh considers Lohia as his political guru and represents Lohiaite tradition in Indian politics. Mulayam Singh Yadav had always been trained in the middle class peasant politics of Ram Manohar Lohia and Chaudhary Charan Singh, which had no scope for

¹⁸ Constitution of the Samajwadi Party: www.eci.gov.in.

religious fanaticism. These leaders had spearheaded the Non-Brahmin movement of the north.

Lohia's ideology advocated for the non-Congressism, use of Hindi for official and political purposes, simplicity in politics, grass-root democracy and decentralization of power, redistribution of wealth and creation of just and equitable society¹⁹. Socialist also disdained for the 'urban capitalists', and they held them responsible for the wide disparities present in the society-the rich and poor divide. They criticized capitalist class for the exploitation of working class and acquiring of wealth through unfair means.

On an overview of the Samajwadi Party's programme, it may be said that it has mainly been addressed to both the working class and the middle classes that constitute the bulk of Indian society. Industrial and rural labour, small peasants, artisans and small entrepreneurs constitute the principal audience of the Samajwadi Party. The Samajwadi programme, like the communist, is oriented to the left in the sense that it advocates decisive state intervention in favour of more privileged sections of society. As the party manifesto puts it, the party will plan for the interests of 'little men' and 'planning should include not merely organization and development as now, but should also serve human interests'²⁰.

The Samajwadi Party holds that the political and economic power should not be alienated from the people. The human and material resources of the community should be developed in harmony with the environment through a process of planning and participation from the grass roots upwards. Like large scale, industries must be undertaken only where indispensable for the common welfare. Small and medium scale industries should be preferred as a rule²¹. The common person should not be threatened by oversized economic and political structure.

¹⁹ Limaye, Madhu, *Birth of Non-Congressism: Opposition Politics 1947-1975*, New Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1988, pp.82-83.

²⁰ Yadav, Mulayam Singh, *My Struggle*, Lucknow, Lohia Trust,, 1999, pp.9-53.

²¹ Ibid.

Political power should be dispersed throughout the body politic by restricting society on the model of the 'four-pillar state' in which power would be distributed not only between the centre and the states as in conventional federal republics, but between the centre, the states, the districts and the municipalities/gram panchayats. Economic power should be dispersed by breaking up the concentration of industrial and agricultural wealth so that there is a equitable distribution of resources among the different sections of the national community²².

The Samajwadi Party would reform industry by providing for a nationalized sector, a medium scale private and a small-scale cooperative sector. The ultimate objective aimed at is that all means of production should be owned by the society.

The SP is strong advocate of Swadeshi. Mulayam Singh quoted- 'the first mantra of swadeshi as I would desiderate-strengthen agriculture-based economy. On a blind imitation of west, it should be risky to follow industrialism. Already the country is a victim to its disastrous effects. We are poor precisely for the reason we have not advanced the farmers. We are not opposed to industries, neither to big cities, I should like to make it perfectly clear that without farmers' cities and towns can never grow prosperous. Nevertheless, without urban centers villages can grow and prosper. There is no confrontation between industry and agriculture, but the fact remains without farming and without agricultural production factories will not be able to function.'²³

Samajwadi Party's stand on the issue of reservation is based on Lohia's vision of caste. Lohia considered the eradication of caste as the primary objective of any socialist programme because, for him, caste was the overwhelming factor in Indian life. He did not regard affirmative action in the education system as desirable but emphasized the need for quotas in the administration and for election of candidates for public office.²⁴

²² Lohia, Ram Manohar, *Wheel of History*, New Delhi, B.R. Publishers, 1955, pp.10-11

²³ Yadav, Mulayam Singh, *My struggle*, Lucknow, Lohia Trust, 1999, p.44.

²⁴ Jaffrelot C., *The Rise of OBC's in the Hindi Belt*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 59(1), 2000, pp.148.

Samajwadi Party is a strong votary of reservation for backwards, minorities, women. It emphasized on reservation as a socio-issue political issue, as well as a war against poverty, which is necessary to increase people's participation in democracy. The SP courted backward castes by demanding affirmative action for backward castes in representative institutions and mobilizing them against the threat to their political position posed by the proposal to introduction of thirty three percent reservation in parliament for women. Speaking at the backward caste rally cited, Ex-SP leader Beni Prasad Verma pointed out:

“Attempts to divide us continue, now in the form of women's reservations. If there are women here please do not take offense, the idea is correct in principle. But if a proposal of this type is implemented, then our position will slip further... In our state, hardly 15 percent of the women are literate. In addition, from among the backward castes, only 1-2 percent women are literate. So when these 33 percent reservation are implemented, which women are going to go to the parliament? Not women from among this 54 percent of the population... We say, first give reservation to backwards, and then from this reservation, give 33 percent to women in parliament, we have no problem.”²⁵ Samajwadi Party is in favour of ten percent reservation for women inside a political party itself as a mandatory provision.

On the issue of language, Samajwadi Party is the strong supporter of 'Hindi' as a national as well as link language and also favoured use of other regional languages in the place of English. Its slogan is not to remove English but replace it by Hindi and other regional languages. In the views of Lohia – “a correct language policy has been evolved. Hindi should be the language of the central government. Immediately after, the gazette post of the central government should be reserved for non-Hindi speaking areas for ten years. The centre should correspond with the states in Hindi and the states should correspond with the centre in their regional language until such time they learn Hindi. The medium of education up to graduate course should be the regional language and for post-graduate studies, it should be Hindi. The district judge and magistrate may use their regional languages whereas the High Court and Supreme Court should use Hindustani. The speeches in Lok Sabha should

²⁵ Kanchan, Chandra, *Post Congress Politics in UP- The Ethinification of the Party System and its Consequences* in Roy Ramshroy and Wallace Paul ed 1998 Elections and State Politics, New Delhi, Sage, 2000, pp.79.

generally be made in Hindi states... s who do not know Hindi may speak their own language²⁶. SP has adopted same policy/ideology regarding the language issue.

It advocates that Hindi should not be imposed on the non-Hindi speaking areas, but they can use English as a means of conversation to the central government but in state works, regional language should be strictly used. There must be some central institutions in non-Hindi speaking states where medium of education strictly should be Hindi. English should not be compulsory subject in school education. Hindi and other regional languages should be used in technological works so that it is possible to modernize them.

As an offshoot of socialist movement, non-Congressism is the main stay of SP. Samajwadi Party is a strong votary of third force or the third front, which maintains equal distance from both Congress and the BJP. It regarded third front as the most viable option in the present political scenario and recommended six major issues for the success of third front in the national politics²⁷:

- TH-14109
- a) Backwards, schedule castes, women, minorities should raise, strong voice for the reservation in jobs, business and politics, only this movement could give third front a more broad based support/popular support.
 - b) The Third front should start fighting against communalization of society, government and the complete administrative set up.
 - c) To save country from the evils of globalization, biased policies of IMF and World Bank and in this process third front should act collectively in favour of agricultural sector. Agricultural interests should attain priority over large manufacturing unit.
 - d) The Third front should evolve strong national consensus on the issue of national security and should try to secure national interest against the US

²⁶ Lohia, Ram Manohar, *Language*, Lucknow, Lohia Trust, 1956, p.6-7.

²⁷ Yadav, Mulayam Singh, *Lok Chintan*, Lucknow, Lohia Trust, 2001, pp.11-133.



pressure. Third front should keep strict vigilance on the issues of national defence and inter-state relations.

- e) The Third front should unite students and youths and mobilize them against imperialistic and communalistic policies. It should try to organize a national struggle against the communalism.
- f) Sixth issue is related to the language. SP regarded it as a very basic question related to the heritage, pride, modernization, poverty elimination and future prospects of the country.

The Samajwadi Party is of the view that both BJP and Congress are responsible for the downfall of our country. Due to wrong economic policies as well as covert secularism of the Congress, the country finds itself caught up in a mounting foreign debt and has emerged as the poorest nation in the world, besides paving the way for communal forces. Again, it is because of the communal politics and the anti-minority attitude of the BJP that the unity and integrity of the country has come under increasing threats. Both these parties have been working against the interests of the Dalits, the minorities and the other backward classes. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain equal distance from both the Congress and the BJP and a secular third front could be the only remedy against these disastrous forces of national disintegration²⁸.

On the issue of foreign policy, national security and international affairs, Samajwadi Party has same old socialist ideals of world peace, friendship with the other developing nations of the world and not to subordinate national interests against the American hegemony. Other aspects of Samajwadi Party's ideology includes unity and mobilization of youths against communalization, change in higher education structure, increased expenditure on primary and secondary level of education with secular outlook.

An overview of SP ideology represents Lohia's influence to the large extent. It presents socialist tradition of politics where simplicity was essential for the leaders.

²⁸ Ibid.

Power should not be concentrated in hands of few, grass root democracy was favoured to achieve just and equitable distribution of political power to all the sections of society, affirmative action for backwards and minorities and creation of a secular society.

Shift in the socialist ideology of the SP in the Recent Years

In the recent years, SP's ideology has changed a lot under the influence of National General Secretary Amar Singh. The SP general secretary is a politician by definition but it is for matters other than politics that he hits the headlines- amongst all other things, for the company he keeps and for the lifestyle he favours²⁹. Though the Samajwadis of yore never concealed their disdain for the 'urban capitalists' today they are assiduously courting a number of corporate houses not only for attracting investment in an industrially backward state but also for raising funds for electioneering and other party activities totally against the Lohia's ideology of simple politics.³⁰

Among the members of the UP development council constituted under Mulayam Singh's regime, which was also described in political circles as the 'Super Cabinet', are Adi Godrej, Anil Ambani, Kumarmanglam Birla, Subrato Rai Sahara and Amitabh Bachchan. The Chairman of the council was Amar Singh who is often referred as the party's 'Chief Executive Officer'

Mr. Mulayam Singh himself is clearly troubled by the charge that the SP has lost sight of its original goals, that the glamour quotient in the party has reached levels incompatible with its backward caste, backward class orientation. He rarely appeared in public without his business and Bollywood friends. It had become common for him to address press meets flanked by film star MPs rather than by party's toiling, and increasing faceless, office bearers³¹.

²⁹ Vidya, Subramaniam: *Samajwadi Party: Light Years from Lohia*, The Hindu, Feb 11, 2006, pp10.

³⁰ Prashant Kr., *Samajwadi Chamilion Socialist Code Criminal Capitalist and Communalists*, EPW, Nov.27-Dec22, 2004, pp. 5079.

³¹ Vidya, Subramaniam: *Samajwadi Party: Light Years from Lohia* The Hindu, Feb 11, 2006, pp10.

In defence of this glamorous politics SP Youth Brigade president Akhilesh Yadav said 'Being a Samajwadi does not mean that one can't wear designer watches or that one should use the old fashioned phone; to fill the economic abyss' we are ready to take the help of people from any walk of life, allegations come from the people who are not familiar with the Samajwadi ideology and are simply jealous of our grassroots appeal.'³²

In favour of party's shifting ideologies veteran leader and die-hard Lohiaite Janeshwar Mishra quoted 'Lohia lived 1960s, when the nation was still idealistic and political climate relatively innocent, now the time have changed not just for Mr. Mulayam Singh but for all political parties. Lohia lived his beliefs, as did Gandhi. If Lohia's obsessive austerity seems an anachronism in Amar Singh's SP, the starkness of Gandhi's life has long faded from the Congress' memory. In its youth, the sectarian RSS too practices simple living of a king that contrasts sharply with the seven-star atmosphere prevailing in the conclaves of the current-day BJP.'³³

With changing perception, SP has changed its ideological moorings and entered in an arena of glamorized politics from the Lohia's socialist approach of having simplicity in politics. But as an offshoot of socialist movement SP has been recognized for its 'Samajwad' the very foundation of the party, since long, so it should not totally leave the Samajwadi content of party's philosophy.

³² The Indian Express, 2007, April, 29.

³³ Vidya Subramaniam: *Samajwadi Party: Light Years from Lohia* The Hindu, Feb 11, 2006, pp10.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER III

EXPANSION AND STRATEGY OF THE SAMAJWADI PARTY

Samajwadi Party (SP) was not only one of the primary gainer but also an aggressive pursuer of the Mandal upsurge in north India. As a major player in the politics of one of the largest state of the Indian union, the SP is an example of the rise and fall of backward caste (OBC) politics. In the rapidly changing political scenario of the country over the last fifteen years, very few players have actually retained a steady strength and the Samajwadi Party is one among them.

Political strategy of a party is an outcome of its ideology and social base i.e. based on its ideological foundations and social support. Party formulates its strategy for the elections. It is political strategy, which decides party's performance at the polls. In case of both either winning or losing at the elections, entire responsibility of the party's performance goes to its strategy. If the party wins the electoral battle, it is regarded as the success of the party's strategy and if it loses as a strategic failure, thus political strategy defines actions, policies and programmes of the party as a criterion of evaluation. Generally, front running leaders of the party decides its strategy at the polls and afterwards; i.e. in government formation or acting as an opposition.

This chapter is an analysis of expansion and political strategy of the Samajwadi Party since its formation in the year 1992. It examines reasons behind the success of the party in state politics, policies and stand adopted during its rule in the state. It presents party's strategy in state assembly and general elections.

Before formation of the party in the year 1992, Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav ruled the state as the head of Janata Dal government. After 1992, party had acquired power in the state twice. However, in all regimes its policies are not much distinct from each other. Since its emergence SP represented itself, as a party committed to secularism, minority protection and welfare of the backward castes. Party's expansion in the state depends on its support among the two communities. The Samajwadi Party was successful in the state due to its ability to

accommodate minorities and backward castes interests in its fold.

The electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh was in volatile situation throughout the 1980s. This was the period when Mulayam Singh was building his constituency in the state. Under the leadership of Charan Singh, the Lok Dal cornered almost thirty percent votes in the 1980 General elections. However, its vote share in the assembly election was just little over twenty percent vote share, while the leadership of Charan Singh could not effectively exploit the caste cleavage, political developments contributed to the communal polarization of the UP electorate in the mid 1980s. Rajiv Gandhi's attempts to satisfy communal elements both among the Hindus and among Muslims produced a polarization, which had exploited effectively by the BJP. As the Hindu vote turned more and more towards the BJP, the newly formed Janata Dal was able to project itself as the party that cared for the minorities, a legacy that Mulayam Singh later exploited to his advantage.

In UP, the JD under Mulayam Singh decided on a two-pronged strategy, which enabled the party to defeat both the Congress (I) and the BJP in the 1989 elections. It distanced itself from the BJP by promising protection to the Muslims and gaining support of their leaders. Secondly; it took advantage of the rapid caste based mobilization by forming caste alliances to strengthen its backward caste base while at the same time preventing the consolidation of Hindu vote under the BJP.¹

The JD in UP was able to post an effective performance in 1989 with a combination of backward castes and Muslims and Mulayam Singh Yadav became Chief Minister of the State for the first time.

Mandir –Masjid controversy and Samajwadi Party's Secular Stand

During the Rajiv Gandhi period, the Mandir-Masjid dispute made communal politics important in UP. Though the dispute dated back to 1949, the opening of the masjid complex in 1986 focused attention on it. It was a political move to appease Hindu sentiments. Muslims formed the Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC). Communal strife became intense leading to riots and at least 30 persons were killed

¹ Pai, Sudha, State Politics, *New Dimension: Party System, Liberalization and Politics of Identity*, New Delhi, Shipra Publications, pp.79-80

by 6 April 1986, in Uttar Pradesh. The Mandir-Masjid controversy gave fundamentalist organizations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, and RSS importance. Prior to the 1989 Assembly elections, the 'foundation stone ceremony' assumed importance.² In January 1989, the VHP decided to initiate a sustained campaign in UP culminating in the foundation stone ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on 9 November. Despite much opposition, the UP government allowed the ceremony to take place on the disputed site.

Janata Dal was opposed to this ceremony. V.P. Singh and Mulayam Singh joined the Left parties in condemning the VHP programme.

The new JD government, under Mulayam Singh, decided to take a firm stand against attempts by the BJP and the VHP to build the temple. He organized 'Sadbhavana Rallies' against the 'Rathayatra' of the BJP. Rathayatra was successful in mobilizing people in both urban and rural areas and led to serious disturbances in several parts of India. The Yatra was on 23 October and Lal Krishna Advani was arrested before it reached Ayodhya. On the 30th, a large number of karsevaks in Ayodhya were killed in the police firing.

The shooting of karsevaks accelerated the process of communal consolidation and anger was directed against the secular state. The anti-state rhetoric- symbolized by police repression of the karsevaks-played an important part in quickening the metamorphosis of religious sentiments into a mass movement. It also sowed the seeds of disunity in Hindu ranks which were divided in terms of support for the temple construction versus long-term political interests were tied up with Mulayam Singh Yadav, who was forging an OBC-Muslim alliance to displace the upper castes from power and was thus committed to the protection of the mosque and the secular fabrics of the UP society. Much of the opposition against him was due to V.P. Singh's decision to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations and the fear of loss of power and privilege by upper castes. Mulayam Singh's action created a siege mentality exploited by the BJP and the form of a campaign in the local press. The

² Ibid, pp.81

party blamed him for the violence in the state and portrayed his actions to stop karsewa as another operation blue star.³

Split in the Janata Dal and June 1991 Election in Uttar Pradesh-

The break-up of the JD began soon after the 1989 elections itself. Mulayam Singh's opposition to attempts made by the BJP to construct a temple at Ayodhya and to the Mandal report, led to the expulsion of his faction from the party by V.P. Singh. This has resulted in the split of Janata Dal into the Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) and the Janata Dal (A).

June 1991 elections that followed Mulayam Singh's first ministry demonstrated both disillusionment with his government's performance and the perils of factional struggle and party splits.⁴ From a position of a governing plurality in the assembly, the JD was reduced to ninety-one seats while Mulayam Singh's now separate Samajwadi Janata Party won only thirty seats. The BJP, benefiting from the wave of Hindu nationalist sentiments as well as the disunity of its opponents, won 211 seats and formed the government. Confidence in Mulayam Singh's ability to work with others and sustain alliances was further damaged SJP split once again. The close alliance between Mulayam Singh and Chandrasekhar that had earlier divided the JD now came under strain itself, and Mulayam Singh departed to form the Samajwadi Party.⁵ Mulayam Singh was joined by the vast majority of assembly members and party workers, demonstrating that he had an iron grip on the SJP organization in UP and as well as close link with the grass roots.

He was also engaged in a project with wider ramifications: a mission to establish his new SP not merely as one remnant of the JD but as a reincarnation of India's socialist political tradition. Under Mulayam Singh's guidance, the SP was involved in a process of revisiting the strategies and reasserting the history of the parties that had drawn inspiration from Ram Manohar Lohia. In particular, Mulayam Singh was keen to follow Lohia's tradition of building alliances with other political

³ Hasan, Zoya, *Quest for Power: Oppositional Movement and Post-Congress Politics in UP*, New Delhi, OUP, pp210-11

⁴ Duncan, Ian, *New Political Equations in North India*, Asian Survey, Vol.XXXVII, No.10, Oct, 1997, pp.984

⁵ Ibid.

parties that also sought to mobilize support among the lower castes, the Dalits, and the Muslims.⁶ By February 1993, he managed cordial relations with, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), quickly forming an alliance with its leaders, Kanshi Ram and Mayawati, and then launched a frantic campaign to gain support for the party in the next election.

Emergence of SP-BSP Combine

After the formation of the Samajwadi Party, in the 1993 elections were held for the UP state assembly. These elections were held in the backdrop of President's rule called after the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya at the end of 1992. A crucial turning point of this election was the formation and subsequent experience of the coalition government established in November 1993 between the Samajwadi Party (SP) headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) of Mayawati and Kanshi Ram.⁷

President's Rule declared originally in December 1992 was extended for six months in June 1993. Elections were finally held in late November, the results of which produced a number of surprises. First was the failure of the Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party to make any further headway on its position in the previous assembly, equally surprising was the remarkably poor performance of the Congress in the state. A third electoral surprise was the ultimate demise of the Janata Dal (JD) from UP politics. The fourth significant outcome of the election was the emergence of BSP as a first successful political platform for the Dalits of UP.

The fifth significant outcome of the election was the performance of the Samajwadi Party. The BJP won 177 seats of the 422 seats contested, the SP/BSP 176 seats, the Congress 28 seats and the JD 27 seats.

The heaviest burden that Mulayam Singh Yadav carried into the elections campaign of 1993 was the record of his first term as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, from December 1989 to June 1991. His controversial decision on various important issues that dominated the tenure at the time appeared to be faded any prospect of his return as the Chief Minister. First was his reaction to the Mandal Commission

⁶ Ibid, p.985

⁷ Ibid, pp. 979

recommendation i.e. reservation for the backward classes in jobs and education. Mulayam Singh has been a strong advocate and supporter of such measures of positive discrimination, but his government was not able to control the public disorder and violence that followed the announcement and state suffered from the poor law and order and administrative incompetence.

Another serious challenge was the Ayodhya issue. Mulayam Singh was determined to take a forceful stand against any demonstrations at the disputed site. Mulayam Singh organized a series of 'sadbhavana' rallies during the summer months of 1990 as a counter to the Hindu agitators, and refused to compromise or allow demonstrators access to the disputed site.⁸ He ordered police actions over the Kar Sevaks. Nearly 200,000 people were arrested, half of state was put under curfew and newspapers were banned.⁹

Mulayam Singh also alienated another important element of JD support base when he decided to confront Mahendra Singh Tiket- a powerful farmer leader and leading representative of the Jat community¹⁰.

Mulayam Singh's relationship with the state's senior civil servants was also uneasy. In his first term, record numbers of IAS officials were transferred. All these circumstances and decisions tarnished Mulayam Singh's image largely.

Throughout the long campaign leading to the November 1993 assembly elections, Mulayam Singh Yadav was determined to be seen as someone who would form an alliance only with the BSP. Both Mulayam Singh and Kanshi Ram asserted that they would fight election together and struggle to defeat Hindu nationalism at the national level. They represent their alliance as the state-level struggle of the fight against the BJP in the entire country.

After the declaration of election results success of Mulayam Singh strategy became apparent. He had succeeded in mobilizing the votes of the backward classes and Dalits. At the same time, he also had convinced the Muslims that the SP/BSP alliance was the only force that could prevent a return to the BJP rule. A careful

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ India Today, January 15, 1991, pp. 30-32

¹⁰ Tripathi, R.P., *Mulayam Singh Yadav: Rachna aur Sangharsha*, New Delhi, Lohia Trust, 1993, pp.107

process of candidate selection supported the strategy: the majority of candidates were from the backward classes and Dalits, but members of the higher castes and Muslims also found places.¹¹

Its election manifesto promised a quota of 27 percent for the OBCs in the state administration and it implemented the quota once Mulayam Singh Yadav became Chief Minister for the second time through the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Act of 1994. This new measure, while it was under discussion, was strongly resented in Uttarakhand where the OBCs represent only two percent of the population.¹² Mulayam Singh severely criticized this protest movement.

The Uttarakhand Agitation-

The issue of Mandal was a controversial issue in the early months of Mulayam Singh's alliance administration. The expected announcement that the new government would implement the Mandal proposal in UP passed with little reactions. When Mulayam Singh government twenty seven percent reservation for the OBC's in admission to all educational institutions, the new policy lead to a massive upsurge against him in the state's eight hill districts in particular. The fifty eight lakh population of this region had long been demanding an independent hill state of Uttarakhand, and ignored by successive governments over the years. The implementation of Mandal recommendations came as fresh blow to them and they sought a suitable amendment in the policy where the hills were concerned.

The population of OBC'S was not more than 2.5 percent in hill districts of Uttar Pradesh. Hence, the Uttarakhand people demanded a proportionate reservation in government jobs in this region, while the remaining jobs would go to local people, who were also socially and economically deprived.

The start of the August 1994, however, triggered widespread agitations, as students and their supporters in the hilly Uttarakhand districts launched a campaign against the reservation of twenty-seven percent of jobs and scholarships for backward classes in a region where they made up less than two percent of the population.

¹¹ Ibid, p.989

¹² Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Rise of Other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 59, No.1, Feb, 2000, pp.101

Uttarakhand had never experienced such unrest before. Violence escalated through August and September, and all the towns in the region were paralyzed by strikes and demonstrations. While protest meetings and demonstrations had already started the Mulayam Singh's government announced its decision to extend the reservation policy even in admission to the educational institutions. This was taken as adding insult to injury. Demonstrators were killed when the police opened fire and, in one incident, a police Deputy Superintendent was killed as agitators became violent.

Mulayam Singh refused any concessions to the demonstrators and retaliated by calling government-sponsored strike on 13, September to support the cause of reservations for the backward castes.

It was only after several demonstrations had been staged and a day's successful bandh in the entire region that Mulayam Singh realized the necessity of giving some serious thought to the problem. Initially, he offered to consider two percent reservation for the hill people in government jobs. However, in view of the Supreme Court's ceiling of fifty percent on total reservations everyone knew that the offer was just meaningless. Mulayam Singh was in no mood to sort out the Uttarakhand problem through dialogue. He chooses to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to whatever was happening there.¹³ Thus, the several months long strikes that continued in government offices of were simply ignored by the Chief Minister.

Mulayam Singh and the Samajwadi Party paid a heavy political price for his mishandling of the Uttarakhand agitation, as the BJP exploited the sentiment to the full and turned the entire districts into a bastion of its support.¹⁴

Language Policy of the Samajwadi Party-

Promotion of Hindi was one of the core areas of socialist politics for getting middle class support. Samajwadi Party also adopted the socialist stand. Party's stand on language helped it to approach the masses. During his Chief Ministership, Mulayam Singh ordered that all official communication in the state had to be done in Hindi. After directing that all administrative and official work be done in Hindi in the

¹³ Shafizumman, *The Samajwadi Party: Social Base, Ideology and Leadership*, Delhi, APH publishers, 2003, pp 153-154

¹⁴ Ibid

state, he gave a befitting reply to the supporters of English, who had criticized the move. He also undertook a tour of south India to put an end to the anti-Hindi campaigns.¹⁵ He reiterated repeatedly that he did not oppose other Indian languages and that he was in favour of their promotion.

Samajwadi Party was only against the compulsory status of English since it was not a common Indian language and because its dominance denied equal opportunities to everyone. He requested the Tamil Nadu government to use Tamil instead of English for all its correspondence purposes. Mulayam Singh declared that – my slogan is ‘remove English’ not ‘eliminate English’. After 1990, the English question paper in the State Public Service Commission exams was no longer allowed to be compulsory. In additions, the compulsory English translation of question papers in Hindi was also done away with.

Mulayam Singh further announced that the Urdu language would be the second language of the state and would be used on all signboards and nameplates in every government office of the state.

He created greater employment opportunities by instituting over 6,000 posts of Urdu teachers in the state’s schools.¹⁶ Besides, he allowed, the entrance test for recruitment to the newly raised Shanti Suraksha Bal to be conducted in many of the languages mentioned in the Eight Schedule of the constitution, including Urdu.

Samajwadi Party and the Administrative Cadre-

As in his first term as Chief Minister Mulayam Singh had shown his readiness to transfer and replace larger number of civil servants and police personnel during the first few months of his second term. By the end of August, there were only fifteen upper caste incumbents, in the influential position of ADM, compared to forty-three previously. Ten of the thirteen posts of Regional Food Controller were occupied by the officers drawn from the backward classes and the Dalit and Muslim community, compared with only five under the previous administration. In addition, Mulayam

¹⁵ Shafizumman, *The Samajwadi Party: Social Base, Ideology and Programmes*, Delhi, APH publishers, 2003, pp141-142

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 145

Singh launched a grass root campaign encouraging the population to make more complaints to the local officials and present them with charter of demands.

His government at that point had only three “representatives” of the upper castes but as many as twenty members of the OBCs and Dalits and two Muslims. Upper castes bureaucrats were transferred to the non-essential posts. A Kayastha replaced the Chief Secretary, a Brahmin. These decisions, which were party publicized on purpose, were made under the pressure of the BSP. However, they accorded well with Samajwadi party’s strategy.¹⁷

In Uttar Pradesh, out of 900 teachers appointed by Samajwadi party’s second government, 720 were Yadavs. In the police forces, out of 3,151 newly selected candidates, 1,223 were Yadavs.¹⁸ Such a policy alienated the BSP, but also the Kurmis, the second largest OBC caste of the state, which was well represented in the BSP. Several protests were organized against the Yadavization of the state under the Mulayam Singh’s government.

Mulayam Singh in his second term also repealed anti goonda raj act and anti-copying act and constituted ‘State Minority Commission’. Some anti social elements became powerful in the state. Charge sheeted criminals like Madan Bhaiyya, Mukesh Pandit, Yadu Nath Singh came under the state security cover and D P Yadav became minister.

Breakdown of SP-BSP Alliance-

Throughout the first twelve months of his second term of office as Chief Minister of UP, Mulayam Singh Yadav had to contend with the recurring prediction that his alliance government was about to fail. Although he had appeared at times to be all too willing to comply with Kanshi Ram’s demands, in reality he had made no concessions of substance to his alliance partner. Yet he had kept the BSP in the government.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Rise of Other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt*, The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.59, no.1, Feb, 2000, pp.102

¹⁸ India Today, 15 October, 1999, pp. 37

¹⁹ Duncan, Ian, *New Political Equations in North India*, Asian Survey, Vol.XXXVII, no.10, Oct, 1997, pp.994

The SP-BSP alliance did form a government in the state, but their relations were not harmonious and the experiment was short lived. The SP was emerging as a dominant partner in the SP-BSP coalition. By June 1995, the SP had cornered the BSP by taking credit for reservation in Schools, appointment of Urdu teachers, inducting the backwards, especially the Yadavs, in the state police force and the Public Accounts Committee, and swept the panchayat polls.²⁰ The deteriorating relations between them culminated in the form of an ugly and infamous circuit house incident in June 1995 in which Mayawati alleged that the goons of the SP tried to kill her, soon, the SP-BSP alliance ended. That was an end of the possibility of developing a social cleavage based on the backward classes and consequently, the consolidation of the same as a political constituency in UP.²¹

Elections to the UP rural local bodies in April 1995 confirmed the weakening influence of the BSP when it took only ten percent of seats compared with forty five percent of the SP. Finally, on 1 June Mayawati announced the withdrawal of the BSP's support from the government, Mulayam Singh was dismissed, and Mayawati was sworn in as the first Dalit CM of UP with the BJP's support, but just after 136 days in power, Mayawati resigned and President's rule was imposed in the state.

Change in the Strategy of the Samajwadi Party after 1995- inclusion of upper castes in the party

In fact, after his Uttar Pradesh government fell in 1995, Mulayam Singh judged his politics in a new light. His changed perception was reflected in many of his statements regarding the use of caste mobilization in politics, which brought forward his belief to keep this use within a certain limit. He also mentioned about the exploitation of weaker caste by strong backward castes like Yadavs. Gradually, Mulayam Singh also reduced the majority of Yadavs from the organizational posts of the Samajwadi Party.

In the quicksand of UP politics, Mulayam Singh was sharp enough to observe that leaders changed loyalties and parties very frequently. It was not easy to build 'Janadhar' (people's support) through 'janasewa' (people's service). Even caste

²⁰ Verma, A.K., *The Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, 3-10 April, 2004, pp. 1512

²¹ Ibid.

mobilization, a clever distribution of patronage and continual use of muscle power were not sufficient to stay in power.²²

Co-option of 'ideological' opponents as well as personal detractors too was necessary to obtain and retain people's support. Mulayam Singh Yadav also realized that a border coalition was needed to consolidate his position in the state and beyond.²³ It was difficult to wean away the Dalits from the Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party. Caste Hindu votes were, therefore, important.

As a result, in ticket distribution for the state assembly election 1996, Mulayam Singh Yadav generously granted tickets to the Rajputs, Brahmins and the trader community. Before Assembly elections, Mulayam Singh had addressed two conferences of Kayasths and Brahmins. Nearly 5,000 people participated in the Brahmin convention held at Rae Bareilly. This was described as an intellectual summit. During the convention, Mulayam Singh claimed that he was not all against upper castes and that most of the ministers in his cabinet were Brahmins. Mulayam Singh also stated that he believes neither in casteism nor in a position to pursue it since there is only a negligible number of backwards in the bureaucracy.²⁴ Similarly, in Kayastha meet in Allahabad, Mulayam Singh surprised the Kayastha society by mentioning and appreciating the contributions of the well-known Kayasthas²⁵.

The strategy of Samajwadi Party to expand its support bases among the upper castes worked well in these elections. The party attracted sizeable number of upper castes votes of the BJP.²⁶ The SP fielded about thirty Rajput out of which eleven had won.

In the state assembly elections held in 1993 and 1996 in UP no party was able to gain majority leading to short lived coalition government and endemic political instability during the 1990s.²⁷ In the last three assembly elections of 1991, 1993 and 1996 the BJP had emerged as the single largest party but in 2002 the SP emerged as

²² Kumar, Prashant, *Samajwadi Chameleon; Socialist, Court Criminals, Capitalists and Communalist*, EPW, Nov.27-Dec. 2, 2004, pp.5078

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Shafizumman, *The Samajwadi Party: Social Base, Ideology and Leadership*, Delhi, APH publishers, 2003, p. 108

²⁵ ibid

²⁶ Rai. V.K., *Caste, Region and Community in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, August 21-28, pp. 2408

²⁷ Pai, Sudha, *Uttar Pradesh: Hung Assembly: Again*, EPW, April 6, 2002, p.1334

the single largest party by winning 143 seats followed by the BSP, BJP and the Congress respectively. In comparison to the 1996 assembly election, SP got thirty six more seats and 3.53 percent more votes.

Samajwadi Party Government in Uttar Pradesh February 2003-May2007

In SP's poll manifesto for 2002 Assembly Elections, one of its listed priorities was restoring the honour of the state and working for its economic upliftment. Maintenance of law and order in the state, end of the mafia raj, goonda tax, and corruption free administration were the other major concerns. Its 2002 election manifesto also promised that agriculture would get status of an industry and special protection of the state. Its manifesto contained special provisions for the small-scale industries, establishment of handloom technology centre, cooperative banks for weavers, uninterrupted power supply. Unemployment doles, cheap education along with special schemes for the minorities.²⁸

In the 2002 assembly election, the SP tried to form post poll-alliance of like-minded parties but did not succeed. However when Mayawati government fell in, 2003, Samajwadi Party formed government with the support of the Rashtriya Lok Dal, Congress and the Rashtriya Kranti Party. Congress-SP alliance was a strategic move by Mulayam Singh to challenge the BJP and BSP. This was the first time that the Congress, SP and RLD had come together.²⁹

Since the 2003 when SP came to power, it had been alleged of having an understanding with the BJP. Meanwhile, BJP's Keshari Nath Tripathi continued on the Chair of the speaker in the state assembly until May 2004. Again, the Chief Minister came to the rescue of BJP leader Lalji Tandon when twenty one people, most of them were women and children, died in a stampede during sari distribution organized in Lucknow to celebrate the latter's Birthday.³⁰

After regaining, the Chief Ministership in 2003, Mulayam Singh had tried to cultivate the image of some one who was doing UP proud. He had specifically tried to

²⁸ Poll Manifesto, Published by Samajwadi Party, 2002

²⁹ Verma, A.K., *The Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, 3-10 April, 2004, pp. 1512

³⁰ Kumar, Prashant, *Samajwadi Chameleon; Socialist, Court Criminals, Capitalists and Communalist*, EPW, Nov.27-Dec. 2, 2004, pp.5079

focus on the development of UP by forming the UP Development Council and by persuading industrialists to invest in the state. The chairperson of the council was Amar Singh the SP's General Secretary and other members were industrialists like Adi Godrej, Anil Ambani, Kumar Manglam Birla, Subrato Roy Sahara and Amitabh Bachchan.

Under the slogan of Uttar Pradesh as 'Uttam Pradesh' party accepted the policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization and emphasized on big projects, industrialization and urban development. Several new projects were introduced in the state. Most controversial of them was Reliance Power Plant at Dadri near Ghaziabad in Western UP that ultimately resulted in wide farmer unrest and violence under the leadership of former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, and ex-SP, MP from Agra Raj Babbar. Mulayam Singh was projected as an anti-farmer, pro urban CM, in contrast to his Charan Singh's legacy. Thus, Samajwadi Party's strategy to attract common man in the name of development was only partially successful.

In order to gain common people support, Samajwadi Party government had started several schemes like 'Unemployment Allowance' and 'Kanya Vidya Dhan Yojna'.

For minorities, Mulayam Singh constituted 'Madarsa Education Council' to regulate education and exams in madaras, initiating computer education in madaras, various scholarships for the students studying in the minority institutions and establishment of two minority institutes – Maulana Mohammad Ali Johar University, Rampur and Integral University Lucknow.³¹ All these populist measures were aimed at getting support in the 2004 General Elections.

Though the SP is accused as a caste-based party resorting to 'exclusive politics' but during his third regime as the Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh realized the limitations of that, and instead resorted to 'inclusive politics' which meant; the necessity to attract all sections of the society, irrespective of caste or religion, to the party fold. As a part of grand strategy the SP, in 2004 general elections, it supported Raja Bhaiyya — a Thakur that in turn provided party with the massive Thakur votes and the party targeted the Brahmins by supporting the accused former minister

³¹ UP Information and Broadcasting Ministry Publication

Amarmani Tripathi.³²

Along with minority appeasement, caste politics, Samajwadi Party also engaged in strategy of utilizing muscle power. Samajwadi Party also have criminal nexus and during its regime, people having criminal past entered in the party fold and even got the ministerial berth. SP has earned the dubious distinction of possessing the biggest group of parliamentarians and legislators with crime records.³³ Samajwadi Party's strategy also includes appreciation and support to the politicians having criminal background. Criminals and the person accused in crime cases, was made ministers in the Smajwadi party's government and some of them, enjoyed state security. Raghuraj Pratap Singh, an independent MLA from Kunda accused of inciting communal clashes, murder and booked under POTA was made Food Minister in Samajwadi Party government. Likewise Pawan Pandey, a hardened criminal and ex-head of Shiv Sena in UP, joined SP along with his supporters.

SP is an important example of a party continuously engaged in the formation and consolidation of a cleavage as well as in overcoming that cleavage. Thus, its strategy can be regarded as a multilevel strategy in which on the one hand it is trying to overcome the limitations of the cleavage politics, on the other hand continuously pursuing policies to appease minorities and OBCs.

SP has learnt the trick of engaging in 'development' rhetoric. Like almost all other parties, the SP, too, is following the framework of liberalization and globalization. Thus, it can appeal to the upper castes in the name of development, and at the same time, continue with its caste-based cleavage.

Samajwadi Party in National Politics-

In 1996 National election, Samajwadi Party was the dominant member of the nationally victorious National Front/Left Front alliance. The movement that started as a struggle against Congress hegemony under the leadership of Ram Manohar Lohia during the 1960's came to fruition in the 1996 General Elections. The political hegemony of the Congress ends and in its place new forces emerged – i.e. BJP and

³² Verma, A.K., *The Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, 3-10 April, 2004, pp. 1513

³³ Kumar, Prashant, *Samajwadi Chameleon; Socialist, Court Criminals, Capitalists and Communalist*, EPW, Nov.27-Dec. 2, 2004, pp.5079

Third Front. Mulayam Singh contested the Lok Sabha elections successfully becoming the Defence Minister in the Union government, but continued to exert a powerful influence in his home state, which remained under the president's rule pending the state elections. Following the 1996, Lok Sabha elections, during the UP assembly elections, BJP once again used its earlier formula and chose Kalyan Singh as its leaders and Mulayam Singh came up with a new action plan under the common platform of United Front.

Kanchan Chandra and Chandrika Parmar wrote, "The Samajwadi Party tried to shift the debate to the issue of rural development, and not to the issue of caste and religion. Besides, it issued a special appeal by initiating an aggressive campaign against the BJP by Muslim voters and presented the United Front as the best secular alternative. In each of its election rally, United Front's leaders described the polls as a contest between secularism and communalism."³⁴

After 1995, Mulayam Singh's perception regarding the caste mobilization was changed. He also mentioned about the exploitation of weaker castes by strong backward castes like Yadavs. Phoolan Devi was given ticket for the Lok Sabha elections in order to bring Mallahs closer. This was his new strategy through which he had tried to cross state politics to achieve national arena. In Mirzapur, the nomination of Phoolan Devi, a Dalit belonging to Mallaha community, helped the Samajwadi Party in gaining the seat from the BJP. Her candidature rallied the Dalits, backward and Muslim communities behind the SP. Similarly, in Kaiserganj, Beni Prasad Verma's candidature consolidated the numerically significant Kurmi community of the constituency behind the SP.

In 1998 elections, Mulayam Singh Yadav charted independent path for his party, keeping distance from both Congress and JD and used religious identity as the primary classification of the electorates. During election campaign, the SP, in order to gain the support of the Muslims, stressed that the BJP remained a Hindu upper caste party, and tried to cut into the backward and Dalit support base of the BSP. At an election rally in Saharanpur during the 1998 election campaign, an SP leader offered the following description of the nation: 'Hindustan is a very great land. Our Hindu

³⁴ Parmar Chandrika and Chandra Kanchan, *Party Strategies in UP Assembly Elections: Theory and Evidences*, EPW, Dec. 18-24, 1997, pp.1503.

brothers are our elder brothers. We Muslims are the younger brothers. It is all right with use of they rule this country, in fact we want them to rule. We are not worried. But our elder brother should fulfil their duty. We in need of a Hindu brother like Mulayam Singh Yadav who gives us the care due to younger brother'.³⁵

The SP made a special effort to reach out to the lower sections of the backward castes. Mulayam Singh Yadav refuted the frequently made argument that his government had worked for the benefits of Yadavs more than other OBCs and promised to address what described as the legitimate concerns of the more deprived sections of the backward castes, though he refrained from identifying them as a separate political bloc.

In the previous election, SP had made a bid to attract upper caste support by allotting approximately twenty one percent of its tickets to the upper caste candidates likewise 1998, general election it continued this effort, increasing the percentage of tickets allotted to upper castes slightly to twenty five percent and openly appealing for upper castes support in its 1998 campaign.³⁶

Samajwadi Party had tried to consolidate Muslims, upper castes and backward castes to come together in order to defeat Bahujan Samaj Party .Speaking in Saharanpur, Kanshi Ram's electoral constituency, Mulayam Singh declared: 'They have come here after having done a survey that taught them to fight where there are no Yadavs. In Phulpur the Yadavs defeated them. Here there are no Yadavs. But there are our Muslim brothers, our Rajput brothers, our Brahmin brothers. Make sure that such people lose their deposits'.³⁷

The Samajwadi Party registered the sharpest gains in the 1998, Lok Sabha elections, increasing its vote by almost eight percent compared to the 1996, Lok Sabha election, became second largest party in Uttar Pradesh after BJP, and followed by the BSP.

Since 1998, the party is facing the dilemma of carrying forward its anti-BJP

³⁵ Chandra, Kanchan, *Post Congress Politics in UP: The Ethnification of the Party System and its Consequences* in Roy Ramashroy and Wallace Paul ed. 1998 Elections and State Politics, New Delhi, Sage, 2000, pp.77

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ The Times of India, Feb 14, 1998

politics and at the same time, avoiding joining a coalition led by the Congress Party. The first concern originates from the party's 'secular' stand while the latter is the legacy of its non-Congressism of the earlier era. These two concerns have meant that the party has remained confined to the politics of UP, although it claims to have support in other parts of the country. These concerns of the Samajwadi Party are also relevant to its ambition of playing a major role at the national level and of catapulting its leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav, to national prominence.³⁸

In a strategic move to form alliance with like-minded party Mulayam Singh along with Laloo Prasad Yadav, took the first concrete step on 24 June, 1998 towards uniting the opposition parties by floating a new front – the Rashtriya Loktantrik Manch. Both joined hands and declared their firm commitment to oust “Communal and fascist forces’ from the centre, out to disintegrate the country and destroy the fabric of the country.³⁹ The Jharkand Mukti Morcha leader Shibu Soren also joined the morcha. Mulayam Singh was appointed as the President of the Morcha. However, this front could not take off and after the Lok Sabha elections; it has withered away due to clash in ambitions of both morcha leaders and their claim as the leading representative of the backward community.

After the collapse of BJP led, government at the centre Samajwadi Party had decided not to support Congress-led government formation and elections were held again in the country in the year 1999 and SP increased its tally to twenty six from the twenty it had won in the 1998. Samajwadi Party's impressive performance in this elections were due to several reasons — Tactical voting by the Muslims to defeat BJP led government, Kalyan Singh's decreasing image in BJP and Mulayam Singh Yadav's aggressive campaign and his never-say-die leadership.⁴⁰

In the 1999 elections, the Congress party blamed Mulayam Singh for having secret understanding with the BJP. Mulayam Singh far from being defensive, attacked the Congress for 'betraying the minorities', on several occasions in the past. He said that the Congress had furthered the BJP-RSS combine agenda on Ayodhya by opening the Locks of the Babri Masjid and facilitating Shila-Pujan there. He also held

³⁸ Verma, A.K., *Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, 3-10 April, 2004, p.1509

³⁹ Shafizumman, *The Samajwadi Party: Social Base, Ideology and Leadership*, Delhi, APH publishers, 2003, pp

⁴⁰ SG, RR, *Uttar Pradesh: Samajwadi Party Holds Ground*, EPW, Dec 4, 1999, pp.3419-20

Congress responsible for some of the worst communal riots which took place in Uttar Pradesh under its regime.

In this elections, Lok Dal leader Charan Singh's son teamed up with the Congress and in order to attract his support base among the rural peasantry, he claimed himself as the genuine inheritor of Charan Singh's legacy and blamed Congress and BJP both parties as essentially 'urban-pro capitalist' parties with an inborn antipathy towards the rural peasantry. After 2004 national elections, Samajwadi Party emerged as the largest party in the state with thirty six seats.

As the analysis of party strategy since the formation of the Samajwadi Party in 1992 shows, we may say that political or electoral strategy is based on its Lohiaite tradition of non-Congressism and Charan Singh's legacy of OBC consolidation. SP strategy largely depends on strengthening of cleavages present in the society. As SP can be seen as an outcome of mandir-masjid issue in the Uttar Pradesh, securing rights of minorities is its chief poll plank. SP claims itself as the 'largest secular party' of the nation. In every election, SP called to unite against the communal BJP and vote for secularism. Several strategic moves of SP show its tendency of minority appeasement. However, since 1996 elections its strategy has been changed and shifted from 'inclusive politics' to 'exclusive politics' this shift in strategy led to the induction of many upper caste leaders in the party and some of them like Amar Singh became leading figure in party organization.

After 1998, Samajwadi Party changes its strategy, ideological position adopted pro-capitalist, pro-urban attitude, by inducting big industrialists, and film stars in the party's fold. This shift in strategy along with the expansion in social base proved successful in 2002 UP assembly elections and 2004 general election and with maximum seat gain party emerged as the largest party in the state.

In 2007, UP assembly elections, Samajwadi Party's strategy was focused upon the development projects and plans made by the party in its regime. Its electoral campaign was on the line of 'India Shining' campaign of National Democratic Alliance, in 2004 assembly elections and Uttar Pradesh was projected as 'Uttam Pradesh' but due to worsening law and order situation in the state, party's campaign and proxy advertisements failed to achieve good results or

manage electoral win for the party.

Thus, to regain its strength and support in the state, Samajwadi Party have to reformulate its strategy and revive its older pro-poor attitude and Muslim support not by appeasing them but by concrete developmental policies and programmes for the minority community in the state, merely shouting anti-BJP slogans are not enough to maintain solid vote base among the Muslims.

There is nothing bad in moving towards development and industrialization but as a party having socialist legacy and ideology there should be no confrontation between poor and rich section of the society. Policies of industrialization should cater to needs of every section of the society.

Party should try to revive its old Lohiaite tradition and leave glamorous politics and crony-capitalism and adopt its earlier common man approach and try to develop a broad based secular platform in the state politics.

Only a complete strategic change in party programmes and policies could help it to regain its voter base.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER IV
THE SAMAJWADI PARTY
SOCIAL BASE AND ELECTORAL ANALYSIS

The OBC's long search for participation in the power structure was rewarded in the year 1993 when the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance came to power in the Uttar Pradesh. An important indicative of this reconfiguration was the change in the composition of the UP legislative assembly. For the first time, the new social combinations of OBCs, Dalits and Muslims dominated the UP assembly in 1993. Between them, the OBCs and Dalits comprised 231 MLAs in the 422 member of UP assembly.¹ This was the first time when an upper caste dominated state in the north India showed the way for the rise of lower castes to the political power and finally entered in an era of mass politics.

In the light of caste-communal- regional polarization of the Uttar Pradesh, electorate, in this chapter an attempt is made to unravel the social base of the Samajwadi Party and its analysis in elections.

'Social Base' of the party indicates the ideological and political influence of the party over castes, class and religions present in the state. In other words, it deals with the phenomenon of 'vote-bank' i.e. which section of society constitutes major support for the party in electoral battle.

Caste has been the determining factor in the state politics. As Rajni Kothari has rightly pointed out, "The political parties mobilize groupings and identities in order to organize their political power. They find in it an extremely well articulated and flexible basis for organization, something that may have been structured in terms of status hierarchy but something that has a basis in consciousness."²

With the social realignment in politics and society of the Uttar Pradesh, it was introduced to a completely new phase of politics characterized by the polarization based on the social cleavages present in the society and this trend is largely

¹ Hasan, Zoya, *Quest for Power: Oppositional Movement and Post Politics in Uttar Pradesh*, New Delhi, OUP, 1998, pp.121

² Kothari, Rajni, ed. *Caste in Indian Politics*; New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1970, p.5.

represented by the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Along with the caste, religion has been also an important aspect of Uttar Pradesh politics since 1990. Communalization of politics, which has become a marked feature of UP polity, can be traced to two inter-linked changes in the early 1980s. The first was a decline of the secular consensus and centrist politics, and its replacement by the communalist ideologies and second trend was the essentially democratic secular and anti-authoritarian method of mobilization by political parties in the 1970s was replaced by that of religious identity.

After, the Rajiv Gandhi period, the Mandir-Masjid dispute made communal politics important in UP. The Ayodhya issue was raised in 1989 elections but it acquired prominence in 1991 general elections. Party system in Uttar Pradesh was greatly affected by this development and social polarization started on the communal lines. At the same time, backward castes in the state were united on the issue of implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations. As a result, communal polarization was accompanied by the caste and politics in the state polarizing on caste-communal lines. Indian National Congress lost Muslim support and almost got marginalized in the UP. The Samajwadi Party was the greatest beneficiary of this development and BJP had emerged as the symbol of Hindu nationalism in the state. Although with the departure of Congress from UP, the state having largest number of MPs in parliament has lost its leading role in government formation at the centre, but it retains its political influence as the chief center for the transitions from Congress dominance to the post-Congress politics.³

Along with religion and caste the other category of social structure, that determines the social base and electoral fortune of the party is the existence of six regions in the state with different caste composition and class structure.

Social Base of the Samajwadi Party-

Samajwadi party was an outcome of the legacy of backward caste movement in Uttar Pradesh and flourished on the grounds of cleavages present in the caste

³ Hasan, Zoya, *Quest for Power: Oppositional Movement and Post Politics in Uttar Pradesh*, New Delhi, OUP, 1998, pp.6

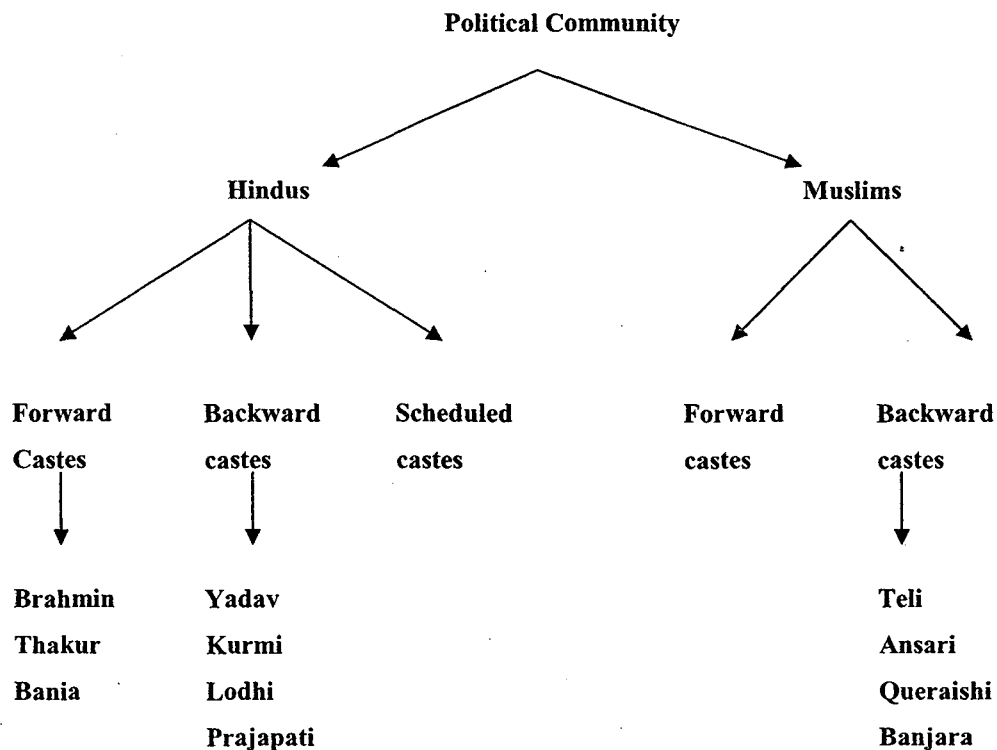
structure of the society. It claims to be the secular force in UP, which protects the Muslim minority not as a charity but as a matter of conscious policy. Thus, its social-base chiefly constitutes of backward and Muslim community of the state and more specifically Muslims - Yadavs (M-Y factor). However, with the changing nature of electorate, in order to broaden its social base, Mulayam Singh is also wooing upper castes.

The Samajwadi Party is the principal inheritor of the support base and orientations of the Lok Dal of Chaudhary Charan Singh. The Lok Dal was the party of the middle peasants, principally of backward caste status, among whom the Jats and the Yadavs provided the central core of support. Its ideology emphasized the economic wisdom and the political virtues of an agrarian oriented economy based on small family farms. Although its founder resented the privileges and pretensions of the upper castes and favoured backward caste reservations, these concerns remained secondary to the economic orientation and appeal of the party to all peasants' proprietors irrespective of caste.⁴ Alliances were freely made at the local level with influential Thakurs and other non-backward castes to maximize the party's seat winning capacity. In contrast to the Lok Dal of 1984, the focus of the Samajwadi Party was upon the backward castes and job reservations for them; rather than upon the economic conditions of the middle peasants generally. Mulayam Singh's strategy for gaining support among large section of society is the idea that lower caste politics and Hindu Nationalism are contradictory to each other and on the platform of social justice he emphasized on the lower castes mobilization by strengthening of caste solidarities. OBCs supported him especially due to his staunch support for the Mandal Commission recommendations. Thus, he forged a strong social base of OBCs, Dalits and Muslims against the BJP's strategy to strengthen unity among different caste of Hindus.

For Mulayam Singh, Mandalization was the cornerstone of the Lohiaite politics to which he strongly committed, and since his brand of politics held no distinct appeal for the upper castes, he felt there was no need to be defensive about it. He was the first politician to advocate the empowerment of the OBCs on the principle of exclusion of upper castes and inclusion of Muslims and Dalits in a

⁴ Shafizumman, *The Samajwadi Party: Social Base, Ideology and Leadership*, Delhi, APH Publishers, 2003, pp.

coalition to fight the upper castes.⁵ However, its Dalits vote base has been totally eroded by Bahujan Samaj Party and OBCs support base is chiefly limited to the Ahir community. Other backward castes are like Lodhis, Kurmis are largely influenced by the Bhartiya Janata Party to such an extent that the Samajwadi Party has become dependent for its continuance as a major party in Uttar Pradesh upon the Muslim vote. This fact became quite evident in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections in which with the decreasing Muslim support base, it had to face severe electoral blows. Muslim support for the Samajwadi Party is highly personalized: it is principally to Mulayam Singh Yadav rather than to the Samajwadi Party.



Source: Chandra, Kanchan: Post Congress Politics in UP: Ethnification of the Party System and its Consequences in Roy, Ramashroy and Wallace, Paul ed. 1998 *Elections and State Politics*, New Delhi, Sage Pub, pp.78.

SP employs two principal categories in classifying the electorate: religion and caste. The SP organizes the electorate as a composite of two insular religious

⁵ Hasan, Zoya, *Quest for Power: Oppositional Movement and Post Politics in Uttar Pradesh*, New De

'communities': a Muslim 'minority' and a Hindu 'majority'. Both the Muslim 'minority' and the Hindu 'majority' are then further disaggregated by the caste. The Samajwadi Party gives more emphasis than the BJP and the BSP on non-ethnic categories, describing itself also as a party of farmers, of the poor, of the young, or of rural India.⁶ While maintaining the primary division between 'the Hindu' and 'the Muslim', the Samajwadi Party frequently switches its attention to the caste divisions among both. The SP initially highlighted only the aggregate caste divisions among Hindu 'forward castes', 'backward castes' and Scheduled castes.

The more detailed picture of caste divisions implied by the party can be traced in a major backward classes rally organized by the Samajwadi Party in Lucknow in December 1996. The rally was organized to train party workers and prepare them for the next election. As a major event for the Samajwadi Party, every important leader of the party attended it. The rally grounds were filled with banners offering support to the SP on the behalf of individual castes that form hardly one or two percent of the population of the Uttar Pradesh: like Pal, Kashyap, Bind and Nishad. The banners illustrated two important aspects of SP's strategies: first, it relied entirely on ascriptive classifications. Although the conference was for the 'backward classes', there was not a single banner speaking for a class based or other non-ethnic group, second the SP, like the BSP, sought to build support not by attempting to unite individual castes into a common cultural community. But, by combining smaller communities having common interest of achieving political power.⁷

The one category excluded from the SP's appeal was the SCs. During its mobilization campaigns, SP in fact aligned itself with other caste categories against SCs and demanded parity in development schemes for backward castes with schemes that already existed for the scheduled castes. During its elections campaign Mulayam Singh accused SCs of misusing the SC/ST prevention of Atrocities Act⁸ to humiliate members of other caste categories. In order to defeat BSP, in place of showing his commitment to the welfare of SCs, Mulayam Singh always tried for uniting other castes to vote against the BSP. This is due to the fact that he had realized BSP's great

⁶ Chandra, Kanchan, *Post Congress Politics in UP: Ethnification of the Party System and its Consequences* in Roy Ramashroy and Wallace ed. 1998 Elections and State Politics, New Delhi, Sage, pp.78

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ An Act prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of SC,ST to provide special trial courts.

influence over the Dalits in the state.

To make its social base strong in the state the Samajwadi Party is following a multi-level strategy, of engaging itself on the one hand in forming and consolidating cleavages and to overcoming the cleavages on the other hand. For bypassing the cleavages, it seeks the support of the upper castes and to consolidating it try to unite the OBCs. Party has also been wooing the Rajputs and other upper castes.

The SP also made an attempt to recruit support from among the 'forward' caste. This attempt of the party is clearly visible in pattern of ticket distribution for the elections. In the 1996 assembly election, the SP had made a bid to attract upper caste support by allotting approximately twenty one percent of its tickets to upper caste candidates. In 1998, it continued this effort increasing the percentage of tickets allotted to upper castes slightly to twenty-five percent and openly appealed to the upper caste for their support in election campaigns. Several decisions taken by the Mulayam Singh government are often related to this policy of broadening social base such as to drop cases pending against Raja Bhaiyya-an influential Rajput leader from the Kunda-Pratapgarh area of the state, and the increasing importance of Amar Singh in party affairs.

Samajwadi Party is criticized as a party of and for the Yadavs. More staunch criticism of Mulayam Singh is to mention him as 'Mulla Mulayam', in reference to his 'pro-Muslim' policy.

Various decision and policies of Samajwadi Party shows that it has to locate itself at the junction of some or other social cleavage. It has been pointed out that SP had a two pronged strategy for winning a social base. On the one hand, in its attempt to build a solid bloc of Muslim votes, party visualizes an undifferentiated Muslim community. It then, juxtaposes this section of the society in terms of the threat emanating from the BJP.⁹ On the other hand, the SP seeks to classify Hindu society into sections- the forward class and backward classes. It hopes to be sole representative and protector of the backward community. Electoral trends shows the Dalit community's support to the SP is almost negligible and they at large support to the BSP in the state.

Although it is true that the Yadavs constitute the rock foundation of the base of the SP, the party claims that it has support among various sections of the OBCs. However, this claim of Samajwadi Party is not totally justified because large sections of OBCs constitutes by Lodhs and Kurmis who are in favour of BJP. Lodh's are largely supporter of BJP as Kalyan Singh himself is a Lodh, while Kurmi support is bifurcated between BJP and SP, and with the exit of Beni Prasad Verma in 2007 assembly election, it reduced up to the large extent.

Thus in terms of caste homogenization, the SP could not work for the consolidation of the entire backward community. . The party claimed to be representing the rural peasantry and backwards, but the fact remained that the party could not even get the middle and lower castes among the backwards integrated into the party owing to the domination of the upper crust, represented by the Yadavs or Ahirs.¹⁰ Many a middle and lower castes among the backwards continued to support the BJP.

Throughout the turbulent decade of the 1990s, the Samajwadi Party steadfastly cultivated the support of the Muslim community of UP faced with a communal BJP and a directionless Congress, the Muslim community in the state was forced to rally behind the SP. Since 1999, the Congress has been making desperate attempts to win back the Muslims.

The BJP's Hindutva approach has benefited the SP by allowing it to strengthen and consolidate its support among the Muslims. As long as the BJP threat is present or continues to exist, the SP can retain its support among Muslims through the relatively low cost strategy of promising protection.

In every election, the Samajwadi Party, targeted all Muslims, and defined them as cohesive religious minority, and all backward castes, among Hindus. Muslims were courted purposefully highlighting the dangers posed to the Muslims by the BJP and describing SP as the only party committed to protecting the lives and security of Muslims.

⁹ Verma, A.K., *Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh*, EPW, 3-10 April, 2004, pp. 1513

¹⁰ Ibid

Another dilemma for the SP is the tensions between the social justice policy of the party and Charan Singh's legacy of upholding the interest of the rural peasantry. It has been observed that the party has resolved this paradox by continuing 'quota politics' and abandoning 'Kisan Politics'¹¹ .

¹¹ Jaffrelot, Christophe, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of Lower Castes in North Indian Politics*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2003, pp.103

ELECTORAL ANALYSIS

Table 1

Seat and vote share of LD/SP

in Lok Sabha and Assembly in UP (1980-2007)

Party Name of the SP	Year	Lok Sabha		UP Assembly	
		Seats	Vote (%)	Seats	vote (%)
LD	1980	29	28.9	59	21.5
LD	1984	2	21.6	-	-
LD	1985	-	-	84	21.43
JD	1989	54	35.9	208	29.71
SJP	1991	4	10.1	34	12.52
SP	1993	-	-	109	17.82
SP	1996	16	20.8	110	17.82
SP	1998	20	28.7	-	-
SP	1999	20	24.06	-	-
*SP	2002	-	-	143	25.41
SP	2004	-	-	-	-
SP	2007	-	-	97	25.5

Source: a * Verma, A.K., (2004): *Samajwadi Party in UP*, EPW, 3-10, April, pp.1510
b Yadav ,Yogendra (2007) : *Shaken to the core*, The Indian Express Editorial, May 18, p.9.

Uttar Pradesh politics was in flux through the 1980s. This was the period when Mulayam Singh was emerging and building his leadership in the state. Under the leadership of Charan Singh, the Lok Dal achieved almost thirty percent votes in the 1980 elections. However, in the assembly election its vote share was just a little over twenty per cent. In 1984-85 too, the party managed to retain over twenty per cent of votes. Charan Singh had tried hard to exploit the caste cleavages, but not much successful in his attempt. Political developments contributed to the communal polarization of the UP electorate in the mid-1980s. Rajiv Gandhi had attempted to satisfy communal elements among both the Hindus and Muslims but his attempts helped the BJP. As the Hindu vote turned more and more towards the BJP, the newly formed Janata Dal was able to project itself as the party that cared for the minorities, a legacy that Mulayam Singh later exploited to his advantage. As the election results in Table 1 make clear, that the JD in UP was able to perform effectively in 1989 with a support of backward castes and Muslims. However, Mulayam Singh was not able to carry this support base into the SJP when the JD split in 1990. Once the Samajwadi Party was formed, Mulayam Singh was once again able to achieve the support of sections of the OBC and the Muslim community. This has produced somewhat a stable voter base for the SP (between 20 and 25 per cent).

Analysis of Samajwadi Party's Social Base in Assembly and National Elections since the Year 1996 to 2007

To analyse party's social base in elections, it is a must to understand the social structure of the Uttar Pradesh. UP is the state with large population and huge diversity in terms of caste and religion. Caste and religion are two important factors in the state politics.

Although, regions do not play much role in the state politics but due to its large size, it affects party's social base to some extent.

Caste – Community Composition of the Uttar Pradesh-

There are, at least, six major religions in the state – Hindus (81.74 percent), Muslims (17.33 percent) Sikhs (0.45 percent), Christians (0.14 percent), Parsis and Buddhists (0.16 percent). About sixty percent people live in villages having

agriculture as the major occupation. There are plethora of castes and sub castes out of which Schedule Castes (SC) (21.4 percent) form an important group; Schedule Tribes (ST) are negligible about 0.21 percent. Caste and religion are the two basic social divisions in UP. Both Hindus and Muslims are divided into innumerable castes and sub-castes. The SCs include Chamars, Pasis, Dhobis, Balmikis, Arikhs and others. The backward castes are Ahirs (Yadavs), Kurmi, Lodh, Koeri, Gujar, Kahar, Gadaria, Teli Barahi, Kachi, Kewat, Nai, etc. Ahirs and Kurmis are considered to be economically well off and politically most influential. The Ahirs are well distributed over the state while the Kurmis have their presence in the eastern and north central districts. Lodhs are a large landowning group in south central part, while the Gujjars are concentrated in Western district. At the top are the upper castes- Brahmin, Thakur, Bania and Kayastha. Brahmin and Thakur are the dominant castes in most of the state in terms of land holdings, but in Western UP Jats and Bhumihars in eastern UP have major share of land. The Banias are trading class and moneylenders, while the Kayasthas are prominent in all professional occupations. Muslims are also divided into several castes of which the Syed, Sheikh, Pathan, Ansari or Julaha are politically prominent. The political significance of this kind of diversity, as Paul Brass rightly pointed out, is that there are no regional identifications within the state. Diversity is spread evenly throughout Uttar Pradesh. This is the most important factor that constrains politics of social mobilization in Uttar Pradesh.

Analysis of Party's Social Base in Lok Sabha and State Assembly Elections

In order to understand 'social base' of SP it is necessary to analyze voting pattern of the state in the recent years. The following table indicates the party-wise distribution of voters across gender, locality, age group, community and class over the Lok Sabha elections held since 1996 till date.

TABLE 2

Social Base of the SP in Lok Sabha Elections(1996-2004)

Category		Elections			
		LS 1996	LS 1998	LS 1999	LS 2004
Gender	Male	21.0	29.2	19.3	26
	Female	20.5	28.2	16.8	26
Locality	Urban	23.1	35.8	19.3	27
	Rural	20.0	26.8	17.9	18
Age groups	upto 25 yrs	19.9	27.7	21.6	26
	26-35 yrs	23.2	34.8	17.5	28
	36-45 yrs	21.7	31.7	20.9	24
	46-55 yrs	21.7	23.6	17.1	27
	50 years and above	15.8	20.8	20.8	22
Caste groups	Upper caste	2.7	3.7	3.3	9
	Yadavs	73.5	76.0	77.4	73
	Other OBCs	28.8	18.1	19.9	23
	SCs	5.3	9.3	4.9	11
	Muslims	54.3	71.7	34.5	47
Economic class	Very poor	19.8	-	17.3	24
	Poor	18.2	-	21.5	27
	Middle	23.8	-	21.2	24
	Rich	22.3	-	13.5	28
	Non-literate	21.5	28.5	19.1	-

Education	Up to primary	23.5	27.3	23.9	28
	Up to matric	21.5	31.8	16.8	-
	College and above	13.5	29.3	12.7	22

Source: Verma, A.K., *Uttar Pradesh: Politics of Social Polarization and its Limits*, Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, vol.15, NO.1-2, 2003, pp. 273-74

TABLE-3

Social Base of the SP in UP State assembly elections

1996-2002

Category		Year of Elections	
		1996	2002
Gender	Male	29.2	24.9
	Female	28.2	24.5
Locality	Urban	20.7	25.7
	Rural	27.7	24.6
Age group	up to 25 yrs	23.5	25.5
	26-35 yrs	23.2	25.7
	36-45 yrs	21.1	26.7
	46-55 yrs	21.7	21.6
	50 years and above	20.5	22.4
	upper caste	4.0	8.3
	Yadavs	59.6	70.8

Caste	other OBCs	19.0	17.4
	SCs	8.4	6.8
	Muslims	47.0	51.2
Economic class	Very poor	20.6	19.4
	Poor	23.8	30.0
	Middle	20.1	22.5
	Rich	15.7	15.6
Education	Non-literate	21.5	26.0
	Up to primary	25.0	27.7
	Up to matric	21.9	21.0
	College and above	18.1	15.8

Source: Verma, A.K., *Uttar Pradesh: Politics of Social Polarization and its Limits*, Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, vol.15, NO.1-2, 2003, pp. 273-74

The analysis of both Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha Elections show that the pattern of support of the party remains same at the both level that is both national and state. It means social base of the party does not differ from state to national level.

The table shows that party receives somewhat similar proportion of votes cutting across gender lines, though minor differences can be observed. This indicates that gender is not a factor of cleavage in the voting pattern in Uttar Pradesh. SP have general trend of receiving higher proportion of male votes than the female. As regards the urban-rural divide, SP has improved its share of total urban votes since 1996.

In the matter of age difference, SP has been considerably strengthened among the youth and older people since the year 1996. With this all other criteria education economic status are not very important for considering party support base.

But when we come to the caste and religion wise support for the party, the phenomenon of vote-bank can be easily visible in the case of Yadavs and Muslims who have tended to vote almost overwhelmingly for the SP. Samajwadi Party is getting more than fifty percent share of Muslim votes since the year 1996, however, in the year 1999 Congress gained the largest share of the Muslims votes i.e. 43.8 percent, and the SP came to the second place.

However, the SP has recovered its position among the Muslim again in the year 2004. Samajwadi Party has largest share of Yadav vote since 1996. SP had not much support other backward castes except Yadavs, moreover, whatever support it has, is decreasing since the year 1996 and from 28.8% it reduces up to the 17.4%, thus it is clear that OBC's except Yadavs are moving towards other parties. The upper caste votes are also increasing nominally. The weakest point of SP's social base lies in its weaker support among the schedule caste community in the state.

TABLE 4

REGION WISE SUPPORT FOR SAMAJWADI PARTY -

Year Region	1989 (JD)		1991 (JNP-JP)		1993 (SP) Assembly	1996 (SP)		1998 (SP) LS	1999 (SP) LS	2002 (SP) Assembly
	LS	Assembly	LS	Assembly		LS	Assembly			
WUP	12(54.5)	47 (42.28)	0(9.72)	2(5.97)	5(8.67)	1(18.40)	10(14.14)	0(22.73)	1(13.96)	7(20.8)
Ruhelkhand	6(35.19)	21(27.60)	0(2.58)	3(11.80)	16(22.62)	4(25.45)	15(23.83)	4(32.62)	3(23.73)	22(25.6)
Doab	11(43.77)	47(36.28)	1(12.08)	12(20.23)	25(25.32)	3(20.89)	22(28.19)	5(33.69)	8(30.44)	27(23.1)
Bundelkhand	2(18.78)	5(13.18)	2(18.0)	0(8.94)	1(3.68)	0(17.27)	3(16.71)	0(27.72)	0(24.13)	4(23.1)
Avadh	10(28.9)	34(22.98)	0(7.83)	10(15.85)	41(27.20)	3(22.15)	35(25.52)	7(30.77)	8(24.9)	29(28.17)
Poorvanchal	11(30.99)	52(27.71)	1(9.74)	7(11.56)	20(12.89)	5(21.38)	25(22.03)	4(29.03)	6(28.59)	57(26.7)

Source: Verma, A.K, Samajwadi Party in U.P., EPW, 3-10 April, 2004, pp.1515. [Vote percents in Brackets]

Regional Classification of Uttar Pradesh-

To assess SP's social base in terms of seats as well as the geographical spread of its performance, a region wise breakup of UP is useful.

Uttar Pradesh is usually divided into seven or eight electoral segments- Western UP, Doab, Ruhelkhand, Avadh, North Eastern UP, Eastern UP, and Bundelkhand. Western Uttar Pradesh is the Jat dominated area, and was known as the Upper Doab. It has 42 assembly constituencies. Ruhelkhand consists of Bareilly, Bijnor, Budaun, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Moradabad, Pilibhit, Rampur and Shahjahanpur districts and has fifty assembly constituencies. The Doab region lies between Yamuna and Ganga and stretches from Agra and Aligarh down to Kanpur. It has seventy six assembly constituencies. Avadh includes the area around Lucknow and has districts of Faizabad and Rae Bareilly among others. It has seventy three assembly constituencies. The Bundelkhand region is the area around Jhansi and has twenty one assembly constituencies. The Eastern Uttar Pradesh region consists of the areas around Allahabad and Varanasi. Sometimes the large eastern region is divided into the North-East region above the Ganga comprising the districts of Bahraich, Ballia and Gorakhpur among others, and the remaining Poorvanchal region. The former has sixty one-assembly constituency and the latter seventy nine¹².

However, there was no uniform pattern of the party's presence in different regions of the state. The party support was declining particularly in western UP, which clearly showed that the SP had not been successful in the Jatland, despite its efforts to evolve a Yadav-Gujar-Muslim combine. Even when the SP entered into an electoral alliance with the BSP during the 1993 assembly elections, the performance of the party did not improve. That explains the success of the RLD in western UP where Ajit Singh continues to enjoy the legacy of his father Charan Singh and dominates the scene.

Another weak region of the party support is the Bundelkhand where its seat wise gains in the assembly elections had been consistently poor (1989-4, 91-1, 93-1,

¹² Verma, A.K, *UP Politics: social polarization and its limit*, Journal of Indian school of Political Economy, vol.15 no. 1&2, Jan- June 2003, pp252.

96-3, 2002-4). In this part of the state The BJP and the BSP are doing better and getting almost an identical share of votes in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections (BJP-27.46 per cent, BSP-28.89 per cent)¹³ but in 2002 assembly elections the SP, with 23.1 per cent votes in the region, was not far behind the BJP (24 per cent) and the BSP (28 per cent). Therefore, the SP cannot be totally out from Bundelkhand region. The SP has improved its position there, rising from a poor 3.68 per cent vote share in the 1993 assembly elections to 24.13 per cent votes in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections again slightly reduced to 23.1 per cent votes in the 2002 assembly elections.¹⁴ This shows that the SP has been able to evolve a base among the OBCs of Bundelkhand, but not strong enough for it to gain seats in the region. Thus, despite poor performance in terms of seats, the party has a significant presence in Bundelkhand in terms of vote share. In other regions, viz, Ruhelkhand, Doab, Avadh and Poorvanchal, the SP continues to perform well. In the erstwhile Uttarakhand region, the SP was an insignificant force: it never went beyond 6 per cent votes there. Thus, it can be said that the SP has a weak base in western UP and Bundelkhand. The Etawah-Etah belt of west-central UP is known as the Mulayam Singh's land-he is from Jaswantnagar; a town adjoining Etawah. This has a major implication as far as the relationship between demographic composition of the electorate and the mobilization strategy adopted by the party is concerned. Even limited or partial backward caste mobilization could not be an all-UP phenomenon owing to differences in social stratification, production relations and power structures in different parts of the state.¹⁵

Western and eastern UP, the Bundelkhand, and Uttarakhand (now a separate state of Uttarakhand) are especially different in terms of social stratification. That is why the party could not even attempt for limited caste homogenization in the entire state, and hence, could not strengthen itself equally in all areas and its support base differs region wise.

¹³ Verma, A.K., *Uttar Pradesh: Politics of Social Polarization and its Limits*, Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, vol.15, NO.1-2, Jan-June 2003, pp. 269

¹⁴ Verma, A.K., *UP Assembly Elections-Caste Dominates Ideology*, EPW, May 25-31, 2002, pp.1977

¹⁵ Hasan, Zoya, *Power and Mobilisation: Patterns of Resilience and Change in UP* in Frankel R. Francine and MSA Rao ed. *Dominance and State Power in Modern India, Decline of a Social Order*, New Delhi, OUP, 1998, pp.133

2007 Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Election

Table 5

April-May, 2007 Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Elections

Community	Vote in 2007	Change from 2002
Yadav	73	+1
Muslim	47	-7
Brahmin	11	+4
Rajput	21	+11
Vaishya	12	-5
Kurmi	21	+12
Lower OBC	20	-2
Dalits	6	-3

Source: *Untold UP Story*, The Indian Express: May 18, 2007

Samajwadi Party's Defeat in the 2007 State Assembly Election -

The 2007 UP state assembly elections held in April-May, SP lost dominant position in the state and replaced by the BSP. In the last election, the SP won 143 seats with 25.4 percent of votes. This time its tally dropped to just ninety seven seats, while its votes share remained almost same as last time. In fact, it rose by a fraction to reach 25.5 percent.¹⁶ This is not routine anti-incumbency verdict but it explains a change in social base of the Samajwadi Party. Of those who voted for SP in the last assembly elections, about 1/3rd moved away this time. The SP could retain only forty-four of the 143 seats it won last time. The Yadav voters did support the SP as much as

last time, but there was no additional polarization like the case of Jatavs for the BSP this time.¹⁷

There is a strong evidence of the erosion of Muslim vote for the SP by about seven per cent, from fifty four percent last time to forty-seven this time. Only two regions of Poorvanchal-East and North East-that went to the poles in the last two phases did witness some polarization with the SP. In rest of the state, the figure was merely thirty eight percent. The SP lost about two percent votes and seven seats in the constituencies with high concentration of Muslim population. This election shows that Samajwadi Party's Muslim vote is not very strong, especially if Muslim votes do not fear the return of the BJP.

2007 assembly elections are turning point in the Uttar Pradesh politics. Samajwadi Party lost election and reduced itself to the second place. In this election, Samajwadi Party lost fifty seats and was reduced to the only ninety seven seats. Although party did not lose, votes-in fact got one percent more than 2002 elections,yet Mayawati's BSP cut into his Muslim-Yadav combine. After a gap of more than a decade, Bahujan Samaj Party is able to achieve clear-cut majority in the state replacing ruling Samajwadi Party to the second position.

In its 2007 manifesto, Samajwadi Party claimed that the promises made in the 2002 assembly election manifesto had been fulfilled. Among the salient features of the poll document was a renewed emphasis on the betterment of the farm sector, strengthening of the cooperative movement, assured supply of electricity and hundred percent employments for the jobless in the next five years. The SP Manifesto declared that free education would be provided to poor students from the higher secondary to the post-graduate level without any discrimination based on caste, creed or religion.

For his flagship scheme, Kanya Vidya Dhan¹⁸, Mulayam Singh said the amount would be raised from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 and number of beneficiaries by a lakh to four lakh. Manifesto also declared that unemployment dole would be raised from present Rs. 500 to Rs. 1500 and steps would be taken to ensure that there would

¹⁶ Yadav ,Yogendra, *Untold UP Story*, The Indian Express, May 18, 2007

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ This scheme started by the government in 2004-05 to provide financial assistance of Rs20, 000 to the poor girls of the state after passing class12th.

be no jobless youth in next five years.¹⁹

Samajwadi Party's strategy in the recent election was of to emphasize on the development taken place in the state during Mulayam Singh's rule as the Chief Minister. Similar to 'India Shining' advertisement hailing Uttar Pradesh as the 'Uttam Pradesh' bombarded viewers throughout January and February. Advertisement claimed that 'UP mein hain dum, kyunki jurm yahan hai kum'. Such advertisement came after the 'Nithari incident' in the Noida.

Samajwadi Party also used other organizations like the Janjagarn Sansthan, Rashtriya Shanti Lok Manch and Uttar Pradesh Swabhiman Sangh to castigate its opponents. While party advertisements highlighted the achievements of the government, those issued by these outfits targeted Mayawati as the party's biggest enemy followed by Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh.

The SP advertisements claimed among other things that UP tops in attracting investments. It also showed achievements of the Uttar Pradesh, from increasing the retirement age for teachers to sixty-two, to building 412 bridges and 23,112 km of roads in three years.²⁰ The advertisements claimed that Mulayam built more roads and bridges in three years in all of the last fifty years.

To highlight Samajwadi Party's commitment to 'third front' leaders of the five prominent regional parties Telgu Desam Party, Indian National Lok Dal, Asom Gana Parishad , All India Anna DMK along with SP joined hands and voice for a political alternatives. They came to UP and campaign for the SP. This was an attempt to strengthen Samajwadi Party's ideology of forging a Third Front to challenge BJP and Congress.

Thus 2007 election campaign of Samajwadi Party was based on proxy ads and claims, personal attacks, star campaigners etc. but all attempts were strategically not successful. The party lost the elections with worst ever performance. The utter failure of the law and order machinery, and Mulayam Singh playing the Yadav card, helped Mayawati broader her support base even among the higher castes.²¹

¹⁹ Samajwadi Party Releases its Poll Manifesto, The Hindu, March, 2007

²⁰ Verma, A.K., *Poll Promises, UP and Away*. The Indian Express, April 8, 2007

²¹ Desai, Darshan and Pande, Alka, *Till Last. Mulayam Blind to Writing on Wall*. Uttar Pradesh Decides, The Indian Express, 12 May, 2007, p.3

Many of the SP's micro-strategies of expanding its base courting of upper castes, including Rajputs and Kurmis-did pay off. The SP's pre-poll smugness had some basis in reality. Also, many of the populist measures yielded some dividends: fifteen percent voters reported that some from their family benefited from the unemployment allowance, twelve percent reported benefited from Kanya Vidya Dhan. Samajwadi Party did have an image of being strong on development, and not just among his supporters. However, these gains were smaller than expected and were wiped out by his losses among the Muslims and the political polarization that resulted from the severe indictment on law and order and corruption in the SP regime. Thus, the SP is more vulnerable than it might appear. Its core support from Muslims is shrinking and it does not have a strong auxiliary support from any other section of society.

In 2007 assembly elections, the core support base of Samajwadi Party, Muslim voters had a problem of plenty. Mulayam Singh could no longer afford to be complacent. At least two important Muslim groups have emerged during the last year, challenging Mulayam Singh's secular credentials and accusing him of hobnobbing with the Sangh Parivar and of using Muslims as mere vote banks.²²

There are so many contenders for power is emerging in UP, intended to work as an 'alternative to the Samajwadi Party'. Jan Morcha of V.P. Singh and Raj Babbar, United Democratic Front (UDF) and People's Democratic Front (PDF) each backed by powerful Muslim names and organizations, a fresh entrant, Jamat-e-Islami-Hind, which along with the Jan Morcha Alliance is regrouping the "non-Samajwadi Party secular forces"²³. All fronts in the state raised the same issues: implementation of the Sacchar Committee recommendations, reservation for backward Muslims, right to property to Muslim women and participation of the minority community in governance.

Although, not all these fronts have proved to be strong enough in recently held assembly elections and some like People's Democratic Front even patched up with the Samajwadi Party before elections but these developments point towards the emerging alternatives in Uttar Pradesh politics. In recent assembly elections, Mayawati's BSP

²² Kalhans, Siddhartha, *Man in the Middle*. The Indian Express, March 11, 2007, p.9

²³ Ibid.

proved as another contender for Muslim votes in Uttar Pradesh.

For re-gaining its old social base, it has to mobilize minority community and try to revive its old images rather than using them merely as a vote bank. Thus, leaving opportunism and working on a comprehensive agenda of development could only help SP to regain its position in Uttar Pradesh.

Samajwadi Party is no doubt a strong regional force and here to stay, but it has to face difficult test from its own traditional support base, and to improve from this condition, it should emphasized on gaining support from other BCs, Muslim and try to improve party organization.

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CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

After discussing the emergence, ideology, strategy, and social base of the Samajwadi Party, as representative of the socialist tradition and also most successful offshoot of it in the India politics, we have seen that the success of the party since the formation in U.P. is generally attributed to the pre-eminent role played by the party in the reservation and Mandir – Masjid dispute and the remarkable degree of adaptability in recruiting member by accommodating minorities and backward castes interests.

It is ability of the Samajwadi party to mobilize, accommodate and form coalition of dominate caste and community groups, which enabled the party to establish its dominance over the state.

The Samajwadi Party as an offshoot of Janata Dal has been successful in U.P. due to strategy pursued by Mulayam Singh Yadav since 1989. His strategy includes on the one hand taking benefit of caste based consciousness especially of rich peasantry developed after the Green Revolution and distancing itself from BJP by promising protection to the Muslims and gaining their support.

An analysis of strategy and social base of the party made it clear that Samajwadi Party came to power in the Uttar Pradesh due to the decline of the Congress in the state ,fear among the minorities and backward castes reaction against Brahmanical domination of the state; since independence. Mulayam Singh was able to impress minorities with his secular credentials and represented himself and his party as defender and protector of their rights. As he was capable to join two streams of welfare of backward castes and protection of minorities together and convinced both sections of society that their combined interests are safe only in the hands of the Samajwadi party, he had created a 'vote bank' for his party since its inception.

Electoral analysis of party's social base indicates that its major support base confines to the 'Yadavs' of the state, all other caste group of the community like Lodhs, Kurmis are divided between SP and the BJP. Thus, it is Muslim-Yadav /M-Y factor responsible for the party's dominant present in the state politics.

However, with the changing nature of electorate, Samajwadi Party is shifting towards the 'inclusive politics' i.e. inviting others castes in the party's fold and have tried to achieve more broad support base by wooing upper castes. Party had achieved some success in attracting 'Rajputs' to its fold with help of its General Secretary Amar Singh, but , Party's attempt to mobilize upper castes are not yet to be proved successful, only small fraction of forward castes inclined to the party's ideology and programmes.

The present study shows that although the SP emerged in the framework of secular politics, regarding, welfare of the minorities in state, in its three terms as the CM, the party leadership had not formulated very concrete programmes for the welfare of the Muslims except a few like, recruitment of Urdu teachers and translators in the state government, constituting the Madarsa Education Council. At large, it confines to the populist measures and announcements like declaring Fridays as holiday in the state and inculcating fear of BJP among the Muslims. As a party that receives its major chunk of the votes from the Muslim community, it is not able to bring them in the mainstream of the UP politics, thus, Muslims are still only a 'vote bank' for the Samajwadi Party. For welfare of other backward castes, Mulayam Singh concentrated on the 'Yadavization' of the administration and 'Yadavs' were appointed not only on important administrative posts but also in the state police, schools etc.

The study of party's ideological foundation shows shifts in its ideology. The Samajwadi Party claims to represent the socialist tradition and Mulayam Singh regarded, Ram Manohar Lohia as his political guru and his party as an inheritor of Charan Singh's legacy of agrarian politics. Lohia's political ideas were based on non-Congressism, OBC consolidation, anti-capitalism and simplicity in the politics, although SP had started from the same background but has clearly shifted to a pro-urban, pro-capitalist, attitude. The Party is very close to big business houses and film stars and as a result has adopted a glamorized politics in the place of Lohia's politics of grass roots, party declared capitalists as an asset for the society and vehicle of development. The shift in ideology has caused some rift inside the party, where old Lohiaite like Janeswar Mishra showed their discomfort with the party's new thinking

but these instances of resentment are very few. Due to the growing stature of Amar Singh in the party, many important leaders even left the party.

In making alliances Mulayam Singh as a votary of oppositional unity and non-Congress, non-BJP, Third front had tried for alliances several times since 1992. But, always failed in sustaining and maintaining them for long. Party's alliance with the BSP, RJD, RLD were short lived. This shows party's incapability of accommodating various streams in its fold.

In policy formulation and their implementation, present study concludes that most of the policies adopted during Mulayam Singh's term as the Chief Minister were more or less populist measures rather than development based programmes. Although some of its policies like state take-over of the closed sugar mills, welfare schemes for the farmer like crop insurance, release of debt, land-on-contract for the landless laborers, government control over the cement factories, scholarships for the BCs, SCs and minorities etc. were essentially good, whereas schemes like unemployment doles, Kanya-Vidya-Dhan were measures to attract poor class but not able to remove poverty from the state.

An analysis of party's current status in the state politics shows that the results of 2007 assembly elections are a wake up call for the Samajwadi Party as it is losing ground among the minorities and even backward castes. Although party leaders are satisfying themselves with the perception that party loses seats but not vote, percent that in fact increased slightly from the last elections and defeat is just because of anti-incumbency.

Electoral debacle of SP in 2007 Assembly Elections resulting in BSP's coming to the power is a pointer towards certain new trends in the state politics such as:

- a) Shift in the political loyalties of certain specific communities.
- b) Increase in political maturity of an average voter resulting in performance and accountability as the determining factors of electoral performance.

The Party's defeat in the 2007 elections is more than due to anti-incumbency; it is largely due to the party's weakness in persuading large section of society through policies and programs.

It is failure of the party's long running campaign of "Uttam Pradesh". It is signal that Muslims and BCs except Yadavs are moving away from the party and no more depending upon the party, as their sole representative in the state politics. Even upper caste, among which the Samajwadi Party had tried enough to broaden its base, does not support the party as per expectation.

There are large numbers of Muslim organizations developing in the State, which are constantly criticizing Mulayam Singh's attitude towards minorities as selfish and treating them only as vote banks. Appeasing, a community might work for a short time but for achieving support for a long run requires a constructive program for their development and proper fulfillment of their other socio-economic needs.

Samajwadi Party needs to adopt different approach and should redefine its vision of minorities for regaining its support base in the state. In case of backward classes, it needs the same exercise. Samajwadi Party was a significant development in Uttar Pradesh politics as a symbol of secularism and socialism and to stay here it needs to regain its base, it has to revise and redefine its approach.

Last, but, not least, it was socialist ideology and Lohia tradition that helped party to construct its ways and flourish in the state. It was socialist appeal of the secularism and social justice, which had brought mass support for the party. Masses still regarded party as an offshoot of socialism, so in times, when Samajwadi Party is shifting from its ideological foundations, it should not leave the past behind and try to resolve contradictions it is facing in the name of socialism and development and try to recombine both; having more friendly approach towards the common man.

Only, through a concrete strategic and ideological change Samajwadi Party could gain what it is claiming as the 'India's largest secular Party'.

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