

**MOBILISATION STRATEGIES OF LOK - DAL IN UP  
1974—1986**

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DECLARATION

This Dissertation entitled "MOBILISATION STRATEGIES OF LOK DAL IN U.P. 1974-86" Submitted by Mr. Ramesh Sharan Rai, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any University. We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of M.Phil. Degree.

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RAMESH SHARAN RAI

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been considerable interest in studying the problems of politicization and mobilisation of the rural peasantry. Most studies have linked the analysis of mobilisation with competitive power structure and party politics and elections as well as policy making and execution of various programmes. But, there are differences in the approach taken to analyse the problem. In the beginning, several scholars applied the pluralist weberian model that treated politics as autonomous of the social and economic spheres, whereby political development and economic development are seen as independent to each other their main concern was with the structural and functional aspects of Indian politics that contributed to, or are a threat to political stability and equilibrium.<sup>1</sup>

There were others who recognised the limitations of the above approach in throwing light on

the pattern of power and dominance in rural India as it is affected by Social and Economic changes taking place since independence. They tried to study the politics of mobilisation and competitive power politics aimed at influencing or capturing the reins of government in terms of the changes in social relations and Economic changes. In other words, attention came to be laid on the study of the politics of mobilisation in agrarian India in relation to the social and Economic determinants, while at the same time giving importance to the role played by parties and groups and leadership in bringing about change.<sup>2</sup>

The present study examines the mobilisation strategies of Bhartiya Lok Dal between 1974 and 1986<sup>3</sup>

In delineating the "strategies" of mobilisation of BKD, attention is paid to locate the various groups, they tried to attract and shape into an electoral power base that could transfer to them the reins of the government in U.P.

This is to be done by identifying their policies and programmes over the years and analysing them in terms of the groups they are targeted to mobilise. Another significant aspect of mobilisation strategies of BKD that is related to the recruitment of membership to the party and allocation of party positions among the target groups, This throws light on the process of consolidation of the party base as well as spreading the required consciousness that moulds them into significant contenders for governmental power. This can be seen in the distribution of party tickets as well as ministers among the various groups. Besides, it can throw light on the discrepancy in the interests they profess to represent or voiced by their policies and programmes and the groups they have really served in practice.

The study proceeds to trace BLD's strategies of mobilisation by linking them with the objective and target groups of such mobilisation. Due attention is given to the socio-economic changes occurring in U.P. in the wake of Zamindari abolition and the green

revolution which threw onto the political canvas of U.P. a numerically strong class of rich and middle peasantry mostly drawn from the upwardly mobile middle and backward castes. In the process the extents of success of the mobilisation strategies of BLD in sought to be explained basing on the degree of convergence of caste and class. Both caste and class deserve, equal prominence to explain the nature of mobilisation of the rich peasantry drawn from the upwardly mobile middle and backward castes, the core of support group of BLD. It is to be noted here that Paul Brass in his analysis of U.P. politics in his "Caste Faction and Party in Indian Politics" Vol.II talks of the imperfect correspondence of caste and class. While noting that wherever caste and class converge on a target group in the mobilisation strategy of a party, there in more scope for success. At the same time he sees class appeals as being of limited influence and perceives U.P. politics to be run by and large along caste lines.<sup>4</sup>



This view has been contested by Dr.Zoya Hasan in her work Dominance and mobilisation and rightly points out that a proper explanation of the challenges of the political mobilisation in U.P., especially of the rich peasantry, which in the largest support group of BLD, necessitates an approach that is based on convergence of caste and class<sup>5</sup>

She goes on to point out the relevance of class to analyse the controls of rich peasant over scarce economic resources and promotion of their political and economic interests on the one hand, and the impoverishment of poor or marginal peasantry and Agricultural labour on the other.

"The strategy of the Green Revolution persistence of land concentration, the growing immiserisation of the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers and the rich peasants' control over economic resources tended to advance only the interests of dominant classes. This suggests that class analysis,

for from being irrelevant, is the key to the understanding of many aspects of U.P. society. It is particularly so for unfolding the strategy of dominant, classes, which are engaged in promoting their economic and political interests"<sup>6</sup>.

At the same time the role of caste as a factor hindering the unfolding of U.P. politics along completely class lines cannot be ignored. As Dr. Hasan notes that while class analysis "in the key to the understanding of many aspects of U.P. society" at the same time one has to see how "the caste and community factor more than any other variable has limited rather than determined the thrust of political mobilisation".<sup>7</sup>

In this study the mobilisation strategies of BLD reveal caste-class convergence as far as its major economic programmes and demands are concerned, but also suggest the use of caste idiom by backward castes to weaken upper castes dominance in U.P. politics and government the latter strategy in aimed at appealing to

the poorer sectors mostly form the OBC's whose support is essential to gain power. This mobilisation strategy of BLD explains its emergence in 1974, when the earlier BKD led by Charan Singh merged with the erstwhile Socialist party the SSP. The divergent pulls of class interest explains the 1979 splits of the Janta Coalition, that was earlier formed out of the merger of BLD and Jan Sangh as major constituents in 1977.

The mobilisation strategy of BLD in U.P. also reveals the attempts being made by the rich peasantry from the upwardly mobile castes in the state to transform themselves into a political force and thereby influence or gain political power at the local and state levels to promote their economic interests. It suggests a realisation on their part of the importance of political power alongwith economic power and the reinforcement of one by the other. So also it shows their understanding that to capture the reins of government they have to mobilise the poorer sectors as well. At the same time they have not done any thing

more than pay lip service to the problems affecting those sections, and in practice their prime goals had been to use power to further their class interests.

The study is based on sources drawn from both secondary and primary sources. The Secondary sources include books and articles in the area specifically as well as on U.P. and Indian society and politics in general. The Primary source material is mainly drawn from interviews with senior political leaders of erstwhile BLD as well as from other political parties mostly conducted during 1989-90.

The Study is divided into four chapters, besides, this introducing chapter. Chapter I lays down the background in which BLD emerged from the earlier BKD since 1967, and traces the growth of its socio-economic base among the rich and middle peasantry in the wake of land reforms and Green revolution in U.P.. This analysis becomes essential to gain a proper understanding of the BLD in post 1974 phase, which is

the main concern of this study.

The mobilisation strategies of BLD are discussed in two separate chapters. Chapter II examines the emergence of BLD in 1974 and its consolidation among the middle and rich peasantry mostly drawn from the upwardly mobile middle castes upto 1979. This chapter traces the major constituents of BLD during 1974-79, its support base and its mobilisation strategies reflecting in its declared objectives, policies and programmes, recruitment of party membership and distribution of party tickets and ministerial berths of the state level under the leadership of Charan Singh. The extent of success of such a mobilisation strategy is also assessed upto the point of BLD's short-lived merger into Janta Party during 1977-79.

Chapter III is devoted to trace and analyse the mobilisation strategies of BLD after its split from the Janta Coalition in July 1979, and its formation

into Lok Dal under Charan Singh's leadership. This chapter deals with the mobilisation strategy of Lok Dal during the 1980 and 1984 Assembly and Parliamentary elections. Besides assessing the success or failure of its strategy during 1980-86 period, an attempt is made to trace the continuity and discontinuity in the mobilisation strategies of the BLD, including its later incarnation as Lok Dal, over the years in the two phases, namely, 1974-79 and 1980-86.

Chapter IV, which comes by way of conclusion gives an overview of the mobilisation strategies of the BLD during 1974-86, its socio-economic support base, the general pattern that emerges in this period and the extent of success as well as limitations of such strategies.

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## CHAPTER I

### EMERGENCE OF LOK-DAL

A proper understanding of the mobilization strategy of the BLD requires an understanding of the conditions and context in which it emerged. It is equally important to identify the groups mobilized and represented by the BLD.

The chapter attempts an examination of these two aspects of the emergence of BLD.

An examination of the emergence of BLD becomes essential for the understanding of its base as well as its mobilization strategy. The party was formed in 1974. Through Merger of the already existing BKD, SSP, KMPP and Punjab Khetibari Zamindari Union, of these groups, the BKD was the most significant constituent in terms of the considerable support it enjoyed in western U.P. and parts of eastern U.P. This support structure was constructed over a long

period by Charan Singh. Besides the BKD, the other significant constituents were the SSP which had a strong support among the Ahirs or Yadav in Eastern and central U.P. The other constituent had little or marginal influence in the politics of U.P. Out of the seven constituent of BLD, only the BKD and Utkal Congress had some influence and support in UP and Orissa.

While tracing the emergence of BLD it is necessary to consider the emergence and base of the BKD and the circumstances in which the latter merged with the SSP and other parties in 1974 to form the BLD.

BKD came into existence in 1967 with Charan Singh as head who was earlier in Congress and left Congress on 1st April 1967 with his 17 followers to form Jana Congress on took oath of Chief minister on 3rd April 1967 with the support of other opposition parties such as PSP, SSP, and Jana Sangh to head the SVD. This breakway group was named Jana Congress and

the members included were equally distributed from eastern and western parts of U.P.

Charan Singh's exit was a result of several political, economic and personal factors "The immediate provocation for his decision was the denial by C.B Gupta of the much coveted agriculture portfolio, the more important reason was his identification with rural peasant proprietor whose interests Charan Singh championed"<sup>1</sup> But Charan Singh did not resign only because of policy differences according to his own account he resigned because he was convinced that although he was the most qualified person for the chief minister-ship the upper castes would never consent to the appointment of a Jat.

His exit marked a significant change in U.P. politics. Charan Singh through his policies and actions had already established himself as the champion of peasant proprietor classes. He identified himself with the rich and middle peasant and symbolized himself as

the leader of this class. His exit resulted in the formation of BKD which became the second most strong party after the Congress and provided platform to the rich, middle peasants and cultivating castes to raise their political demands and enabled them to take part in power politics.

Charan Singh's difference with the Congress leadership were quite old. U.P. Congress was marked with the factional politics in post independence period. Between 1952 and 1969 Congress politics in party and in government in UP was characterized by persistent internal group factionalism which focused around the activities of three leading personalities C.B. Gupta, Kamalapati Tripathi and Charan Singh. These leaders differed in their leadership styles, in their regional support base and in the social forces supporting them.

Major difference erupted between Gupta group and Charan Singh. Gupta was interested in growth and expansion of modern industry Charan Singh and the

majority of legislators by contrast favoured increasing the prosperity of rich peasant proprietors by maximizing investment in and subsidies for agriculture.<sup>2</sup>

During the long period of Congress dominance agrarian interests in the U.P government was represented by Charan Singh. He differed with Pandit Pant and rest of his cabinet on issues affecting the interests of peasantry i.e., when the cabinet voted to increase irrigation rates by 50 percent<sup>3</sup> By the time Pant left for the central government in 1955 two lines of conflict were developing in Congress. One involved the central of the party organization and other involved the broad policy questions of the role of the peasantry in the economy of state and the extent to which peasantry should be taxed to provide resource for the economic development of the state.

Charan Singh took the side of the peasant and opposed any increase in the taxation structure. The

major policy issue that arose during the Gupta government concerned a proposal, introduced in response to the demands from the planning commission to the state government to increase revenue from agriculture, to impose a surcharge of 50 percent on the land revenue in U.P. Charan Singh opposed this issue in the cabinet and in his confidential correspondence with the Chief minister.<sup>4</sup> This dispute between Charan Singh and C.B. Gupta over the land tax issue revealed the presence in the Congress government of two entirely distinct ideological perspectives on economic planning and development. Charan Singh always stood for a prosperous agricultural economy in which the peasant proprietor would be the leading class. Resources were not to be taken from the agricultural sector for the sake of projects that would benefit the urban sectors primarily but rather the development of the urban-industrial sectors, would depend upon increasing the prosperity of the peasantry and hence the purchasing power of the peasants. In contrast C.B. Gupta defended the predominant view of the Indian planning efforts and of the desirable

future social order which invalued the goal of creating modern industrial society based on the presumption that it was necessary to extract resources from agriculture, to support industrial development. Another major irritant was the question of the representation of backward castes Charan Singh supported the claims of backward caste people. As early as 1947 Charan Singh supported and asked for 60 percent reservation for backward castes. Gupta and Pant faction opposed it. Gupta even opposed the relaxation in age limit for Backward castes in the government services. Charan Singh took active interest and initiative in organizing the Backward classes and called for a Backward class conference in 1956 Congress leadership did not approve it but he defied the Congress leadership and organized the conference.<sup>5</sup> He also established for himself in the party organisation a reputation for defending the interests of the backward castes against the dominance of the elite caste groups. In the dispute over selection of Congress candidates to contest the 1957 elections Charan Singh supported the claims of backward

caste candidates. " Thus in his policy positions and in political actions, Charan Singh continued to carve out a unique position for himself as he defended rural values of peasant proprietorship and of the backward cultivating castes. But Charan Singh remained in the Congress despite of his fundamental difference until he felt that it will result in his ascendance to the power politics in U.P. He resigned in 1967 taking advantage of unstable position of the Congress and became the Chief minister,

Charan Singh's Jana Congress merged with other breakaway groups from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc. to form BKD as a new national party. " The former Congress men formed the new party with the apparent intent to fulfill the expected vacuum at the centre where the prestige and authority of the Congress has sharply fallow".<sup>7</sup> These Congress men put together an paper showed an impressive influence with three Chief Ministers, Sri. Ajoy Mukharjee of Bengal, Sri Maha Maya Prasad Sinha of Bihar and Charan Singh of U.P with some



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10 odd M.P's and 180 MLA's to time the exact figure was difficult due to frequent floor crossings. But this national party could not survive long in national politics and its success was short lived<sup>8</sup> But in U.P. it gained strength and became a force to reckon with, The major reason for the BKD degerating into pre dominantly U.P Party was that in most of the states the parties of dissident Congressmen failed to build an organization which could compete successfully with Congress and other political parties what is interesting about BKD in U.P is its transformation from a group of dissident and disgruntled Congressmen into a party with a reasonably clearly defined social base among a section of population which had been created as a self conscious social category by the Congress government land settlement.

Charan Singh Launched the BKD to articulate the interests of the peasant in upper Dab. It's aim was to identify itself with peasant economy, agrarian issues and backward castes it tried to act as defended

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of rural democracy, peasant proprietorship and backward caste interest mainly of middle and rich peasants and supported the demands of law land revenue rated law agricultural taxation and good prices for agricultural produce within the procurement scheme.

Through these various measures BKD identified itself with rich and middle peasants and cultivating castes. It traced to construct its care support among their group. This group was the result of various policies of Congress government and development strategies. This group gave solid support to the BKD.

The emergence of BKD is closely linked with the process of disenchantment of the middle and Backward Castes who were blocked from proper access to power through representation in the bureaucracy and the ruling congress party in the first twenty years of independence.<sup>9</sup> Between 1947 and 1960 the politics of U.P. was characterised by the exclusion of the middle and Backward Castes from the Congress leadership

dominated by upper caste coalition.<sup>10</sup>

Efforts were made by leaders within the Congress such as Charan Singh to organize Backward Classes ever since the 1940's.<sup>11</sup> Charan Singh realised the electoral political of these castes, mostly belonging to the cultivating class. The possibility of organising these castes had always been there in the 1950' too as the middle and Backward castes.

Backward castes benefited from the land settlement but failed to gain what they felt was their due representation and influence in state power<sup>12</sup> Johnson.

The determination reflected by the Congress leadership in UP led by Sampurnanand and later on by C.B Gupta and G.B.Pant to prevent the Backward castes from the party only strengthened the ground for the formation of a party claiming to represent the latter's interest. Such a ground was cleared by Charan Singh

procurement prices<sup>15</sup> This put a strain on governments finances and forced the government to introduce price control and compulsory procurement which was not to the liking of rich peasants of upper Doab as it affected their prospects<sup>16</sup>

Added to this was the disenchantment of the rich peasant belonging to the middle and backward castes for being blocked from membership in the Congress party. Till then only the socialist party gave representation for the rising peasant proprietors from the Ahirs Kurmis and lodhs etc.

Under these circumstances Charan Singh resigned from the Congress party. Several reasons lay behind his resignation. The quarrel over denial of Agriculture portfolio in C.B Gupta Ministry, the ideological rift in representing the rural peasant as against the interest of urban industry as well as the failure to appoint a Jat as a Chief Minister<sup>17</sup>

though out 1950's and 1960's my defending the interests of the peasants proprietors from the middle an Backward castes.<sup>13</sup> Charan Singh did not like himself to be characterised as a Jat leader nor of the Backward castes alone Rather he claimed to be the leader of all the peasants<sup>14</sup>

By 1967 several conditions in U.P. politics were for the formation of separate party tapping the dischentment of the middle and Backward castes. Not only had the Congress party in U.P been ridden by factional politics but could be sustained only by frequent intervention of central leadership. In the electoral competition with the Congress opposition parties especially which socialists began mobilising the middle peasantry and the backward castes like Ahirs Kumars lodhas and Yadavas there were castes who were able to improve their status as benepciary of Zamindari abolition. They also benefited from the government's new agricultural price policy which enabled a rise of 31 per cent between 1967-9 over 1965 level in

The 1967 election brought about a unstable coalition government of the Congress and non Congress opposition parties.

In such a situation Charan Singh launched in 1969 the BKD. Ever since 1967 the backward castes in U.P. came to participate in greater numbers. The BKD was launched to tap the discontent among the middle and rich peasantry comprising backward castes well as peasant proprietors especially in upper Doab region. Despite the fact that BKD rested on the support of several social groups and interests its core base was to be found in the peasant proprietor group from the upwardly mobile middle and Backward castes<sup>18</sup> While these groups previously expressed their disenchantment with the Congress by voting for the independents, they now found in BKD after 1969 an organisation through which they can gain representation as well as compete for political power and thereby attempt to influence state policy<sup>20</sup>

The BKD thus emerged as a key platform for

the Jats, Yadavas and other backward castes in their struggle for power with the old proprietor castes of Brahmens Rajputs and Bhumihars.<sup>21</sup> These particular groups formed the core group to support the BKD under Charan Singh. He had established himself as the Champion of peasants through various measures Charan Singh's policies in post independence period and his writings clearly revealed that he is addressing himself to the peasant proprietor. The fact that he was the Chief architect of zamindari Abolition Act and a consistent champion of peasant proprietorship, opposed co-operative farmings and imposition of ceiling and increase in land revenue were enough to establish him as the champion of peasant proprietors.<sup>22</sup>

He resisted in 1962 the U.P. Government's decision to impose fresh taxes on land (National Herald, Sep. 1964) He also took the lead to denounce the land holding tax Bill. At This time his reputation was enhanced. By the time he resigned from the Congress he had created a base for himself in the peasant

proprietors of middle and backward castes. In popular perception he was seen as the custodian of Kisan interests and the basic values of peasant life a messiah of Kisan. When he launched the BKD he had created a mass base of his own and with his party he was able to secure the adherence of a wide assortments of non Congress groups including a few independents some erstwhile RPI members and a few disgruntled socialists.

The BKD tried to secure its base among its core groups by offering a large number of party tickets in the assembly elections to the middle and Backward castes. In 1969 the BKD put up as many as 115 candidates from these castes while Congress put up only 23 members from those castes. This strategy of BKD worked well making it the leading party in western UP. Besides it occupied second position in UP as a whole.<sup>25</sup>

BKD's success was not at the cost of Congress



party. Most of its votes in 1969 elections were from groups and areas that earlier voted for independents and minor parties.<sup>26</sup>

The BKD's strength was revealed in the areas with holdings of 5 acres and more.<sup>27</sup> It received greatest support in the western region with predominantly wheat growing areas. It was from this region that out of 99 successful BKD candidates 61 were elected to the assembly in 1969.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, in the less prosperous Eastern districts the BKD could gain only 16 out of 96 seats<sup>29</sup>

Thus in 1969 election in UP the BKD seems to have capitalized on the discontent that has been developing particularly in western UP among the middle and rich peasantry. Its identification with their interests drew it the support of those groups most of whom also constituted the newly rising rich and middle peasantry in the western UP. Not only did BKD uphold the policies and programmes like greater subsidy higher

prices for agricultural goods, reduction in irrigation charges, and development levy etc., which reflected the interests of rich peasants and peasant proprietor. It also gave these groups due representation in the party organisation and in distribution of assembly tickets. All this helped in consolidation of support base of BKD between 1969-74.

In 1974 BKD and SSP decided to merge together. This resulted in the formation of BLD. Other minor parties like Swatantra Party, Lok Tantrik Dal and Punjab Khetibari Union also joined the BLD. In this New formation BKD and SSP were the major constituents. While the BKD was able to bring with it the support base of Jats and Yadavas the SSP was also able to contribute with its support base among the Ahirs and Kurmis<sup>30</sup> Thus by 1974 when the BLD was formed it was able to establish itself firmly in the western region as well as the eastern districts.

While the BLD had its central support among

the upwardly mobile middle and rich peasantry, coinciding with the backward castes, this was not sufficient for BLD to come to power. No doubt the economic power of these groups was beginning to be decisive but their numerical strength was still smaller than number of marginal land holders and the landless labourers who stood behind the Congress. As such BLD could gain power in the state only through temporary defection from the Congress support base or by working out strategies to broaden its base to wide groups of the rural masses<sup>31</sup> Thus from 1974 onwards BLD had to frame a mobilization strategy that helps it in consolidating the existing support base as well as broaden it to include other groups in order to defact Congress and gain power in U.P.

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## CHAPTER II

### MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES OF BLD, 1974-79

The BLD established in 1974, had inherited the support base of the earlier BKD led by Charan Singh and SSP. However the predominantly middle and Backward Caste support was not sufficient to put BLD in control of the reins of power in the state. This was because most of its support base came from the rich and middle peasantry. Hence, its base derived from a conjunction of class and caste factors. The BLD was supported by the upwardly mobile middle and backward castes such as Jats, Yadavas, Ahirs Kurmis and the Lodhas. On the other hand the Congress which formed the major party in U.P. politics till then had its base among the Brahmans the Thakurs and Bhumihars in rural areas. The marginal farmers, the landless labourer and the artisans who formed part of other Backward Castes constituted twenty six percent of the population in U.P.. Now the BLD under Charan Singh attempted to compete for the votes

of these OBC's who were subjected to social and political domination of upper castes. He tried first to address himself to the section neglected by the Congress. In U.P. Congress relied heavily on "Harijan, Muslim and Brahman combine"<sup>1</sup>

The support for the Congress was enlisted from the upper and lower sections of the society. Middle class and middle castes were not well represented in the Congress party. Charan Singh's BLD tried to mobilize this very section under its mobilization strategy. This chapter aims at examining how the BLD framed and executed its strategies for mobilization of these various sectors of the rural population during 1974-79.

The BLD's mobilization strategy during 1974-79 was organised to attain two objectives: (a) to construct its support base among the core groups of peasant proprietors especially from the middle castes



and (b) to widen its existing support by recruiting other sectors of the rural population especially the OBC's comprising small land holders, tenants, agricultural landless labourer and village artisans<sup>23</sup>

Given the above objectives, the BLD identified itself through its election manifesto and programmes, with middle castes interest. At the same time it resorted to kisan populism to mobilise the other sectors.

The BLD's programme thus, came to give highest priority to agricultural and rural sector. Besides, it opposed Nehru's model of development through rapid and heavy industrialisation on the other hand, BLD laid stress on the promotion of small scale industry and the cottage industry. It claimed to stand for representation of the economy along Gandhian principles.<sup>3</sup>

It called for checking inflation,

reorganisation of public sector, prevention of luxury and non essential goods abolition of food zones, extension of electricity to villages for running medium and small scale industries and for irrigation purposes, opposition to collective or cooperative farming, prevention of concentration of wealth among the urban rich and reordering centralised state planning and regulation of the economy<sup>4</sup>. An important aspect of BLD's election manifesto of 1974 in the social sphere relates to the stand on reservation of seats in public offices for Backward classes.

Through its election manifesto and economic programme the BLD was primarily appealing to the rural sector. While presenting an image of representing the interests of the rural population as a whole, its main thrust lay in the direction of protecting the interest of rich and middle peasant proprietors as against the small and marginal peasant, the landless labourer and the rural artisan<sup>5</sup> This is especially reflected in the

BLD's opposition to the ceiling on land holdings to below 30 Acres, abolition of food zones, and food grain procurement, demand for electricity for irrigation etc. Its call for reservations for backward classes makes clear its plans of identification with the Backward castes.

The BLD like the earlier BKD, followed a strategy of combining caste appeal as well as class appeal.<sup>6</sup> In its class appeal the BLD identified itself with the rich and middle peasant. In its caste appeal it tried to mobilize the numerous small land holders from the backward castes through its hold over the rich and middle peasantry, the BLD also tried to gain the votes of the poor peasants, the agricultural labourer and the poor village artisans. Through a strategy of mobilization through class and caste appeals directed towards specific sectors of the rural population the BLD like the BKD was able to secure the votes of rich and middle peasants as well as small landholders and agricultural labourers who also happened to belong to

the middle and Backward Castes.<sup>7</sup>

On the political front, the BLD tried to deannounce the continued dominance of politics and administration by the Brahmins and Thakurs.<sup>8</sup> Besides they emphasized on the point of getting greater representation for the backward castes in these spheres. It claimed to represent the interest of these castes and secure proportionate representation of there castes in politics and government<sup>9</sup>. Former general Secretary of BLD Sri Satya Pal Mallik asserted that the "the Lok-Dal tried to give representatives to those sectors who were neglected by the Congress and who represented the real India. Backward Castes representation was very less in the party and assembly. U.P. Politics was dominated by the upper caste groups. Lok-Dal tried to do a fair distribution of the power among the poor and backwards and break the upper caste hegemony". By projecting itself as a force to challenge the upper caste political hegemony in the politics of

the state, BLD tried to garner the support of large sections of OBC's constituency, about 26 percent of the state's population.

Not only did the BLD try to appeal to specific sections and mobilize them through its policies and programmes, but also directed the building of party organization, recruitment of members, distribution of assembly seats and ministries in such a way as to give representation to those sections and there by consolidate its hold over them.

The BLD operated through what is formally a very loose but informally a rather cohesive base. Charan Singh's party does not have an elaborate formal structure. Below the district it is difficult to find BLD party committees, party offices or dues-paying party members. Charan Singh's party has changed names so many times over the years, that most supporters do not identify with the party as an organisational identity. Instead those who supported it thought of it

mainly as supporting Charan Singh.<sup>10</sup>

The selection of Lok-Dal candidates was perhaps the most important part of the process of building party organisation. The BLD leaders, especially Charan Singh, paid personal attention in selecting candidates who were local leaders, having a capacity for personal organisation and a chance of winning.<sup>11</sup> The BLD tried to draw its candidates from a wide spectrum. As such, not only were candidates drawn from the backward castes, who were more in numbers of course but also from the upper castes such as Brahmans.<sup>12</sup>

While giving the middle and Backward castes greater representation in the party organisation, the BLD also recognised the need to extend its base among the poor sections of the OBC's. Besides this support which BLD enlisted by identifying with backward castes, the BLD also resorted to kisan populism. In this direction Charan Singh and his party were able to take

advantage of the developments in the mid 1970's. This related to the steady decline of agricultural Prices and the rise in cost of farm inputs. Taking advantage of such a situation, Charan Singh accused Bahuguna government of deliberate neglect of agriculture and blamed him for the wasteful expenditure on industry that was causing impoverishment of the state (TOI, 3, Jan.1975). In fact this came to form the main plank of BLD in the years to follow S.P.Yadav in his interview pointed out that the policies followed by the Congress were not benefiting the kisan. Marketing of food and procurement prices were fixed and done in such a manner that they benefited the urban dwellers and the middle men, not the kisan. The Lok Dal on the other hand tried to earnestly protect the interest of the kisan.

In the wake of 1975-77 Emergency, imposed by Mrs. Gandhi, the BLD worked towards a merger of opposition parties including Jana Sangh, socialist and Congress (O) resulting in the formation of the Janta

Party which contested the 1977 election on BLD's symbol. The Janata Party was able to achieve a stunning victory, virtually wiping out the Congress in the northern belt. The middle and the rich peasantry continued to constitute the core of BLD.<sup>13</sup> The victory of the Janata Party owed much to the discontent of the electorate with Congress misrule during emergency. The Janata Party of 1977 is interpreted as having been built upon a coalition of these major social forces the middle and rich peasantry, the Muslims and the scheduled castes all of whom became dissatisfied with the Congress during the Emergency.<sup>14</sup> While the BLD aggregated the support of Jats in Western U.P. and Yadavas across the state the Jana Sangh brought along the rich and middle peasant in Awadh, the socialists for their part contributed the support of the small peasant of Eastern U.P.<sup>15</sup>

The BLD on its side was able to improve its support from the middle and Backward castes in 1977 election.<sup>16</sup>



The BLD leadership at the state level however was aware of the need to create a permanent support-base among the Backward castes. The first step in the direction came through the appointment of Ram Naresh Yadav as the chief minister of U.P.. He undertook a number of schemes like high support prices for sugarcane<sup>17</sup> and higher procurement price of wheat<sup>18</sup>

These measures were aimed at strengthening the support base among the rich and middle peasant proprietors the U.P. government also accepted the recommendations of the U.P. Backward classes commission Report and reserved 15 percent of positions for Backward Castes in the government institutions.<sup>19</sup> The inherent differences between the BLD and Jana Sangh factions were soon to come out in the open at the centre as well as in U.P.

While the BLD faction of the Janta party at

the centre supported the policy of reservations U.P. government, the Jana Sangh faction voiced the interests of the upper castes and denounced the move and supported the anti-reservation agitation in many areas of U.P. The Jana Sangh faction wanted reservations based on the criterion of social and economic backwardness not caste.<sup>20</sup>

There developed several differences between the BLD and Jana Sangh factions of the Janata Party on the question of distributive measures and economic policies while Charan Singh, as Home minister tried to influence the government by making it allocate more budget resources to agriculture and Rural industries as well as grant higher prices for sugarcane, they failed to evolve response of the other factions. As a result, he withdrew from the Government. The denial of prime-ministership to Charan Singh in 1977 itself embittered the relations between the various factions. This also reflected on the social level with increasing tensions between the upper castes on the one hand and the middle

and lower castes on the other. This only indicated the limitation of the mobilization of middle and Backward Castes in U.P.<sup>21</sup>

This was no less volatile at state level in U.P. The U.P. regime in the late 1970s was an unstable alliance of the erstwhile Lok Dal and Jana Sangh. While both Parties drew core support from the middle castes and better off peasants, they differed considerably in the pattern of their origin, ideology and organisation. These along with the factor of personal ambitions of the leader of either party of personal ambitions made it difficult for the two parties to achieve a working political consensus.<sup>22</sup>

The Janata rule in U.P. was characterised by changing leadership, shifting alliances and endemic instability. This failure of institutionalization of the Janata Party as a national political force and the political trends integral to U.P. Power competition at

the center was often fought by proxy within U.P. Thus, "Personalty as well as factional and social conflict within U.P. in turn both buttressed the centrally generated cleavages and occasionally cut across them"<sup>23</sup> (Atul Kohli)

The Janata Party in U.P. as elsewhere, was formed out of opposition parties of which BLD was the main constituent. In 1977 elections to U.P. Assembly, out of the 383 seats captured by Janata Party 164 belonged to BLD faction. Charan Singh's BLD dominated this alliance. Both Ram Naresh Yadav and Banarsi Das as Chief Minister thus belonged to erstwhile BLD. Political conflict within U.P. Janata regime revolved around the accommodation of the Jana Sangh faction under the BLD leadership. This involved primarily a struggle over power and control of patronage and only secondarily a conflict over the content of public policies. In the early stages conflict revolved around the selection of candidates for the Chief Ministership and Ministerial berths. With Charan Singh and Jans

Sangh at loggerheads nationally, and with Jana Sangh within U.P. excluded from access to high offices, fractional struggles were rampant and bare political survival was of essence. The relations of social groups supporting the Jana Sangh and the BLD were often quite hostile<sup>24</sup>. These animosities arising out of conflict of interests between urban and rural commercial groups often resulted in serious crisis. Uneven organisational development and the electoral strength of the Jana Sangh and the BLD within U.P. generated additional pressures against co-operation. Jana Sangh favoured a membership drive and organisation election. BLD leadership wanted to consolidate its position first and then go for elections. When it became clear in 1978 that membership drive will take place in U.P., the BLD leadership precipitated a political crisis. At this time chief minister Ram Naresh Yadav dropped the ministers belonging to Jana Sangh faction. The BLD faction must have thought that the Jana Sangh's capacity to increase its political influence would be

greatly reduced without control of ministries and patronage.

Organisational issues and conflicting interests of respective supporters of the Jana Sangh and BLD thus combined with state level factionalism and the spill over effects of the conflicts within the Janata leadership in New Delhi. All this made the prospect of the U.P. Janata acting as a cohesive political force impossible. Atul Kohli summarizes "The Janata regime in U.P. was characterised by a weak and fragmented leadership. The ideological orientation of the regime brought together vague and often inconsistent goals under one umbrella. The organisational structure was weak and the government unstable. To the extent that ideological and organisational features of the regime are discernible at all, the interests of the middle and the rich peasantry came to dominate state politics. The U.P. Janata regime is thus best characterised as a fragmented regime of shifting alliance though the

better off kisan become politically significant"<sup>25</sup>.

~~An~~ analysis of the mobilization strategy of the BLD during 1974-79 reveals that the party had tried to tap the rising middle and rich peasant belonging to the middle and Backward Castes. The BLD had been successful in consolidating the earlier BKD support base among the Jats and Yadavas, and unite with them the SSP support base among the poorer backward castes and marginal farmer and landless labourer in eastern U.P. The BLD tried to cultivate the constituency by projecting a Economic programme favourable to the interests of the peasant proprietors. At the same time they also resorted to kisan populism to aggregate to themselves the support of the small farmers, the agricultural labours and the village artisans mostly belonging to the numerically strong OBC's. The BLD leadership tried to find the denuciation of upper caste hegemony in politics and government a common point of discontent among the rich as well poorer middle and

backward castes. They thus tried to attack the Congress support base by projecting the demands for reservation and proper representation for the Backward caste in administration and politics.

It is evident that they tried to project a combination of the rich and middle peasant falling in the category of middle and backward castes as well as the poorer OBC's comprising the small peasants, agriculture labour and artisans to gain power at the state level. To influence the result at the central level the BLD also combined in 1977 with Jana Sangh, the latter representing the upper castes interest to an extent. Both the strategies paid well in 1977-79.

Their strategies had at the same time revealed their limitation. This first strategy of mobilizing the rich and middle peasant from the middle and backward castes of Western U.P. as well as poorer backward class people of Eastern U.P. as seen in the merger of BKD and SSP into BLD proved to be



insufficient by itself. This combination needed the support of the poorer OBC's as well to gain power. But then even the Congress had been trying to cultivate these latter sectors for long. Hence the support of this group had to be uncertain.

The second combination of BLD and Jana Sangh in the Janata party too proved largely dysfunctional, as the two groups had support base among classes with divergent interests. Attempts at reform on the economic and political level initiated by BLD faction in favour of its support base were actively stalled by the Jana Sangh faction. This resulted in deadlock and ultimately in split of 1979 and the fall of Janata.

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## CHAPTER III

### MOBILISATION STRATEGIES OF LOK DAL 1979-'86

This chapter examines the Mobilisation strategies of Lok Dal since the 1979 split in Janata Coalition. After tracing the causes behind the breakdown of the Janata it analyses the social and political consequences of the split in coalition. Then it shows the emergence of Lok Dal from the erstwhile BLD faction of Charan Singh. Attention is drawn towards explaining the mobilisation strategies of Lok Dal during 1980 elections and 1984 elections in a changed political scenario.

#### Break of Janata Coalition and its Consequences:

The Janata victory in 1977 elections was built principally upon a coalition of three major social forces - the middle and rich peasantry, the Muslim and the scheduled castes. That coalition broke

apart because of both external pressures and internal contradictions that have their sources in the social fabric of UP. The Janata retained its central core of support among the peasantry throughout its two and half year rule. But this support largely depended on the identification of the peasantry with Charan Singh. An important feature of the BLD was that those who supported it thought of it mainly as supporting Charan Singh. Charan Singh's supporters did not identify with the party as an organizational identity<sup>1</sup>. The depth of that support was clearly demonstrated during the period that Charan Singh withdrew from the Janata government, between June 1978 and January 1979. In December 1978 in the largest and most impressive demonstrations ever carried out in Delhi for a political cause over five million Kisans converged<sup>2</sup>. The rich peasant support first for BKD, then for its BLD faction within the Janata and finally for the Lok-Dal, formed in 1979 after split of the Janata party, contributed to Charan Singh's political success.

Though the Janata, or rather Charan Singh was able to retain the support of the middle peasantry it had already lost its hold over the other two elements of its 1977 coalition. Muslim support was weakened by the failure of government to make any significant concession. Concerning the use of the Urdu language, in their deliberate delay of raising a new Aligarh Muslim University Act, by the appointment of a non Muslim, Minoo Massni to hold the new minority Commission established by the Janata government, by the increased incidence of communal riots and the failure of government in controlling them<sup>3</sup>.

Large section of upper castes swung away from the Janata due to its reservation policy. The Janata Coalition broke down precisely because of the perpetual struggle over the distribution of benefits to various castes and classes. The BLD group within Janata party fully supported reservations for Backward Castes. By contrast, the Jana Sangh constituent expressed the disapproval of the upper castes toward a

potential challenge to their power. Reservation policy embittered the relations between the upper castes and Backward castes.

The support of the sheduled castes was weakened by the failure to nominate Jagjivan Ram as the Prime minister, by the growing tension between scheduled castes and middle proprietary castes in the Countryside. "The politicisation of middle and Backward castes, which coincided with the Janata Party split underscored the importance of these castes in U.P. Politics. Political articulation on Caste lines, which was clearly divisive, more freequently took on a confrontational and communal character.<sup>4</sup> Upwardly mobile middle Castes such as Jats and Yadavas when faced with a challenge from lower agricultural landless labourers, often resorted to violence for settling their disputes. Charan Singh made much of his concern for the farming community and for the rural poor but he failed to recognize the existence of the largest segment of the rural poor - the landless agricultural

labourers. It is true in a sense that the problems of landless labourers are simply not mentioned in his writings, in his speeches and his political programme.<sup>5</sup> He opposed any land redistribution. Two senior Haryana leaders, Swami Agniveesh and Rizak Ram, disapproved of the way the rally was being organized. They said "If the Kissan hold a rally to air their grievances against government, it is understandable. But the proposed Kissan rally assumed the colour of a fight between Kisans and Harijans<sup>6</sup>. This was denied by the BLD faction. The bitter antagonism of interests inherent in a compound of caste and clan has explosive potential. Indeed it is often suggested that Charan Singh's Lok-Dal has been associated with various atrocities committed against the poor and landless in the country side.<sup>7</sup>

**Against this it has been argued:**

"Close scrutiny of incidents of alleged atrocities against the low castes, the poor and the



landless in U.P.... does not indicate any clear pattern of association of such incidents with the middle castes or the Lok Dal. Such incidents tend to be more complex and diverse in origin and are not necessarily tied to clear "Struggle in the Country side"<sup>8</sup>. T.J. Byres writes that it would be foolish, indeed to deny the complexity of such incidents that they are unrelated to the peculiarly potent mixture of caste and class which exists in contemporary India, or to the influence unleashed by Charan Singh's brand of politics which remains unproven. However no assesment of charan Singh can ignore the issue<sup>9</sup>.

Rise of Middle and Backward castes such as a jats, ahirs, Kurmis and gujars in a number of districts intensified conflicts between the new yadav and kurmi landowners and the landless agricultural labourers. The treatment meted out to the Harijans by the new ricch landowners was much worse. This trend was closely visible in the increasing incidents of violence. U.P. recorded the highest number of violent

struggles against the Harijans<sup>10</sup>. This violence was maximum in western U.P. where Government was forced to set up a monitory cell in Merrut to deal with complaints of violence against the poor Harijans<sup>11</sup>. Representatives of scheduled castes complained of inadequate protection and representation given to Harijan in U.P.

Rural poor belonging to the Backward Castes were used against the Harijans. They were recruited as goons and muscleman of their own class to terrorize and oppress the poor Harijan. Reliance on ones own caste people for the role of muscle men resulted in the change of the nature of conflicts. Class conflicts easily acquired the nature of caste conflicts.

The reports of the Commission for Sheduled Castes and Sheduled Tribes revealed that the atrocities against the Harijans were invariable instigated by the aflluent sections of the middle caste peasantry.

Social relations were further embittered by the stand of the middle caste big landowners on reservation. Chief Minister, Banarsi Das responding to anti reservation stir in Western U.P. had decided to scrap the reservation policy for sheduled castes as far as promotions were concerned. Charan Singh himself felt that the union government should reconsider the reservation policy and should think over Ambedkar's suggestions that reservations would not continue beyond the 1960's<sup>12</sup>.

The opposition to reservations by sections of rich and middle peasants intensified the political offensive against landless agricultural labourers. So widespread was the problem of Harijan oppression in U.P., that it led the Janata government to legislate for compensation for the families of murdered heads of the Harijan households<sup>13</sup>. The Janata regime was in no position even to prevent the killings of Harijans over issues of class and caste conflict. It most of all under lined the total incapacity of the leadership to

tilt state power in favour of the landless<sup>(14)</sup>.

These various conflicts led to the breakdown of the Janata coalition and this resulted in the inevitable split of the Janata Party. Throughout these struggles for control over the north Indian states and over the Janata party organisation issues concerning the relative political and economic status of elite, backward and scheduled caste and concerning Hindu Muslim relations were even present. After the split supporters of Jagjivan Ram allied with Jana Sangh in conflicts with Charan Singh's BLD group. Members of scheduled castes who suffered from the hands of dominant peasant proprietor groups from the backward castes were clearly opposed to any measure enhancing the influence this oppressive group. To avoid this, they sought an alignment with the Jana Sangh, both because they hoped that Jagjivan Ram would become Prime Minister with Jana Sangh support. Elite caste followers of Jana Sangh objected to the BLD group's policies favouring reservation. The BLD leaders caught in the cross fire

between both ends of the caste order, attempted to divert attention from the backward caste issues to the Hindu-Muslim issue. They described the conflict as an attempt by the RSS elements in the Janata to gain control of the party and destroy its secular character. Thus, as Brass points out "It is a measure of the significance of these two contradictions in north Indian Society - in caste order and in Hindu-Muslim relation which resulted in the felling apart of Janata coalition socially as well as policially. The Congress of Mrs. Gandhi rebuilt its old coalition of the late 1960's by capitalizing on the discontent of the elite caste, the Sheduled castes and the Muslims<sup>15</sup>.

#### Lok Dal and Mobilisation Strategy in 1980 Elections

In the changed political situation following the Janata split, Charan Singh and his BLD faction formed the Janata (secular) which was soon renamed as Lok Dal. Under these circumstances Lok Dal retained its core support groups among the rich and middle

peasantry of the middle and Backward castes.

On the other hand they could not retain the support of Muslims and Harijans who had earlier supported the Janata Party during 1977 elections. Hence in 1980 elections the Lok Dal led by Charan Singh stuck to its traditional strategy of voicing the interests of the rich and middle peasantry. At the same time, they came out in support of reservations for Backward classes so as to retain its support base among the poorer sections of the OBCs.

The Lok Dal had also tried to woo the Muslim Vote by taking a secular posture by opposing the Jana Sangh's links with the RSS. Besides, they also gave them a large number of Party tickets in the 1980 election to the parliament as well as U.P. Assembly. As Sarwar Hussain (MP 9th Lok Sabha) noted in his interview, this strategy of the Lok Dal helped in securing the support of the Muslims in Western UP, especially the backwards among the Muslims<sup>16</sup>.

However, the growing conflicts between the peasant proprietors forming the core group of Lok Dal and the landless labour mostly drawn from the scheduled castes in the preceding years did not allow cope for Lok Dal leadership to secure the support of Harijans. Instead of providing any populist planks to woo their votes, the Lok Dal mostly relied on the ability of the rich and middle peasantry to force these sections to vote in its favour<sup>17</sup>. Mahesh Sharma (former MLA from Meerut) in his interview blamed the Lok Dal of booth capturing and alleged that Harijans and other poorer sections were not allowed to vote freely. He asserted that "even the oldest Harijan has not seen the Polling booth in western U.P. The Jats ensured the victory of Lok Dal in upper Doab (where it claimed 11 out of 14 MP seats it contested) through booth capturing and muscle power."<sup>8</sup>

In the 1977 elections the winning coalition of the Janata Party combined the support base of Lok Dal with the mainly Brahmin, Rajput support based of

Jana Singh. However, with the 1979 split with Jana Sangh, the Lok Dal felt it necessary to secure the support of these upper castes as well to an extent. Hence, it got representation by way of distribution of party tickets in the 1980 elections to the elite castes, along with the ruling and Scheduled Castes as well as Backward Castes.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the election strategy of Lok Dal during 1980 elections tried to meet the changed political conditions as against 1977 elections. While retaining its base among its traditional support groups, Lok Dal leadership tried to secure the votes of the upper castes as well as Scheduled Castes and Muslims.

This strategy of the Lok Dal in the 1980 elections paid off well in U.P. The Lok Dal secured 30 parliamentary seats out of 85 seats.<sup>20</sup>

It emerged the second largest party in U.P., just seven percentage points behind the Congress in the



total vote share of the state.<sup>2</sup>

Besides, the Lok Dal remained the Principal Opposition to the Congress in most of the Constituencies in U.P.<sup>22</sup>

The study done by Paul Brass on 1980 elections in U.P. shows that the Lok Dal had a solid core support group among the Kisans throughout the state. This was especially so with the Jats in Western U.P. and Yadavs who are more widespread in the state. While, the Congress had its core support group in the Brahmans on the other hand the support of all other upper castes and middle-castes were divided between the Congress, Lok Dal and Janata.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1980 elections, despite the Lok Dal leadership's efforts to secure the support of the Scheduld Castes and Muslims, they reverted to voting for the Congress. The Congress also drew to itself the votes of large segments of the Rajput landed elite

groups, a direction in which Lok Dal's efforts at mobilisation did not pay off quite well.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the Lok Dal's mobilisation in 1980 elections succeeded to the extent it banked on the phenomenon of rising importance of the upwardly mobile middle castes forming the rich peasantry.<sup>25</sup>

This is seen not only in the allocation of a large number of seats to candidates from these middle castes but also by projecting a party manifesto that highlighted their economic grievances. Yet, the Lok Dal was not able to cut into the Congress support base among the politically prominent upper castes significantly. In other words, the Lok Dal's Vote share was drawn from the Convergence of caste and economic reasons through its espousal of political and economic advancement of the middle castes.<sup>26</sup>

There was thus a continuation from the 1977 elections into 1980 elections the pattern of what Brass

characterizes as "the politicization and increased cohesion of the middle castes of peasants, who formed the bulk of support for Janata in 1977 and for the Lok Dal of Charan Singh in 1980. Some of them supported Congress (I) also, but most did not and were in conflict with both ends of the spectrum of support that formed the basic Congress Coalition."<sup>27</sup>

#### Lok Dal and Mobilisation Strategy in 1984 Elections

The mobilisation strategy of the LokDal in 1984 elections did not differ from its earlier strategy in 1980 elections. In fact, it did not differ much even in the case of the Congress Party in U.P. And yet, the Congress was able to snatch away 83 out of 85 parliamentary seats from U.P., leaving only 2 seats to Lok Dal in the 1984 Parliamentary elections.<sup>28</sup>

This is to be explained by factors other than that of mobilisation strategy, namely the 'wave' phenomena in the wake of assassination of Mrs. Indira

Gandhi and 'sympathy' factor as well as the clean image of the new Congress leader Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Analysing the mobilisation strategy of the Lok Dal in the 1984 elections one finds much "continuity" than "discontinuity" when compared with the earlier election.

Most of the Lok Dal candidates for 1984 elections were either incumbent or former MLA's. Changes in certain constituencies were made keeping in view their winning chances.<sup>29</sup>

But, then, this was the case with the Congress candidates too to a large extent. In terms of caste composition of party candidates, the Lok Dal candidates were drawn once again from a broad spectrum of castes. In other words, though most of tickets were allocated to members from backward castes, candidates were also drawn from Brahmans and Scheduled Castes and Muslims to meet the requirements of voter-composition

in Caste terms certain constituencies.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, the Congress mostly allocated tickets to Brahmans and Rajputs. Of course the Congress too nominated Muslim candidates in constituencies with large Muslim populations.

Yet, the Lok Dal leadership paid more attention this time to capitalise on the existing anti-Congress sentiment among the Muslims in the wake of recurring Hindu-Muslim riots, particularly in West U.P. This prompted the Lok Dal leaders to field a large number of Muslim candidates.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Brass aptly summarizes that, "The Lok Dal, aware that its base among the middle castes is not sufficient to carry most parliamentary seats, selected many of its candidates with a view towards building coalitions with elite castes, with Muslim, and with Scheduled Castes."<sup>33</sup>

In the 1984 elections major economic issues such as scarcity, high price, poverty, low sugar lane prices did not play any significant role in deciding the final outcome of the election result. Congress leaders hardly referred to economic issues. Lok Dal leaders, especially Charan Singh, continued to voice their earlier views on discrimination of rural areas in distribution of resources, tokalion and parity of price. However, this time no current issues of significance could be highlighted that could rally round the rural population outside their core support group.

It was mostly the issue of dangers posed to the country by internal and external enemies projected by the Congress leadership, in the wake of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination in 1984 that determined the voting.<sup>34</sup>

However, the committed Lok Dal core group continued to vote for the party. The increase in

Congress vote share mostly came from those groups who earlier used to vote for Janata Party/Jana Sangh, though it also secured some support from lower backward castes such as the Kurmis who were not committed to the Lok Dal.<sup>35</sup>

All these factors combined to give the Congress party a massive win of 83 seats of the 85 parliamentary seats in U.P., while the Lok Dal could secure only 2 seats. Lok Dal however occupied the second place in as many as 58 constituencies.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, one sees that the Lok Dal's strategy during the 1984 elections remained the same as during the 1980 elections. However, its success in 1980 elections could not be repeated in the 1984 elections. This is due to changed political situation in the Country. Besides, it is also due to the inherent limitation in the mobilisation strategy of Lok Dal concentrating on the rich and middle peasantry drawn from the upwardly mobile middle and Backward Castes.

This is especially so when faced with a successful mobilisation by the Congress of the upper Castes and the Scheduled castes as well as poorer among the Backward Castes, as in the case of 1984 elections.

An analysis of the mobilisation strategy of the Lok Dal from 1980 to 1984 reveals that while continuing to represent the interests of the rich and middle peasantry of the middle and backward castes, they show a realisation that this support is not sufficient to give them a winning vote, especially in the parliamentary constituencies. This they tried to get over by recruitment and allocation of party tickets to candidates from the Scheduled Castes as well as the Muslim and upper castes too. Among these it was the Muslim vote that the Lok Dal mostly tried to secure during this period, given the anti-Congress Muslim sentiment in the wake of increasing communal riots in the state. They thus tried to project a secular plank and they succeeded by and large in the 1980 as well as 1984 elections. But, then, the Lok Dal could not



secure with equal success the support of the Scheduled Castes mostly forming the landless labourers whose interests were in conflict with those of the groups forming Lok Dal's core support groups. As such, Lok Dal's populist manifestoes failed to pay in the required measure in this direction. Same was the case with the inability of the Lok Dal to gain a sustainable support base among the poorer OBCS. As a result, though Lok Dal retained the votes of its core support group and managed to woo the Muslim vote it could not match the Congress mobilisation of votes from the upper castes, the Scheduled Castes and some poor OBC's in the 1984 elections.

## Notes

1. Atul Kohli, The State and Poverty in India: The politics of Reform, London Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.203.
2. Paul Brass, Faction and Party in Indian Politics, Vol.II, New Delhi, 1984, p.172.
3. Ibid, p.174.
4. Zoya Hasan., "Power and Mobilisation:Patterns of Resilience and change in U.P.Politics in Francise R.Frankel, M.S.A. Rao, (ed), Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a social order Vol.I, pp.189.
5. T.J.Byres, "Charan Singh, 1902 -1987: An Assessment, Journal of Peasant Studies, No.2, January 1988, pp.163-164.
6. See, Hindu, Madras, 17 Oct.. 1978.
7. Brass, op.cit., p.330.
8. Ibid.
9. Byres, op.cit., p.165
10. Hasan, op.cit., p.190
11. The Times of India, 19 Aug. 1977.
12. Hasan, op.cit., p.191
13. Arun Sinha "Uttar Pradesh:mockery of reform", in Economic and Political Weekly, 13, 51-2, 1978, p.205
14. Atul Kohli, op.cit., p.220
15. Brass, op.cit., p.175.

16. Personal Interview with Sarwar Hussain, M.P., on 5/3/90.
17. Brass, op.cit., p.195
18. Personal Interview, Mahesh Sharma on 7/5/1990.
19. Brass, op.cit., p.309.
20. Times of India, Jan. 1980.
21. Brass, op.cit., p.196.
22. Ibid, p.196
23. Ibid, pp.196-7.
24. Ibid, p.17.
25. Ibid, p.197.
26. Ibid, p.198.
27. Ibid, 201.
28. Ibid, 321.
29. Personal Interview with K.C.Tyagi, 11/5/90.
30. Hasan, op.cit., pp.193-5.
31. Ibid, pp.193-5.
32. Brass, op.cit., p.310.
33. Hasan, op.cit., p.195.
34. Based on Personal Interview.
35. Brass, op.cit., p.320.
36. Ibid, p.321.

## CONCLUSION

An overview of the mobilisation strategy of the BLD suggests that their main target group lay among the upwardly mobile rich and middle and backward castes such as the Jats Yadavs and Ahirs. These were also the sections who benefited the most by the land reform and Zamindari abolition of the 1950s which secured their ownership over land. Later in the 1960s and 1970s they were able to utilise the Green Revolution and gain from the higher productivity which boosted their economic interests. This brought with it the urge to use their newly gained economic status and power to forge new political alliances and turn it into political capital which could, in turn, be used to further their economic interests. The BKD of the 1960s and BLD of 1970s was a crystallization of such aspirations. Hence, the mobilisation strategy of the BLD also tried to tap its support from among these sections. The success with which BKD and later BLD secured the support of the rich peasantry drawn from

the rising middle and Backward castes suggests to the Congruence of caste and class at this level of U.P. Society and Politics.

The mobilisation strategy of the BLD also took into consideration the limitations in terms of numerical strength of its core support group. This realization made the leadership, especially Charan Singh, to project the party as a champion of the interests of the peasantry vis-a-vis the urban sector. In other words, the BLD also tried to theoretically break away from a strategy based on caste-class congruence and use wider class appeal to enlarge its base among the numerically significant OBC's mostly comprising the small farmers and agricultural labour. But this latter strategy was more in theory than practice. It was mostly populist without any concrete action to ameliorate their lot. This is understandable given the fact that the interests of its core support group, i.e., the rich peasantry, conflict with those of the poorer farmers and agricultural labour. As such,

the strategy of voicing themselves as champions of larger sections of rural masses failed to pay in the same way as the caste class congruence strategy at the upper levels of the U.P. society.

The BLD mobilisation strategy also reveals attempts to forge alliances with the traditionally upper castes of U.P. society and politics, specially the Brahmins and Bhumi-hars. Here again the economic interests of the BLDs support base and upper castes were conflicting to the extent, the former represented a rising force displacing the latter from their traditional dominance. In fact, even on the political and administrative levels the continued dominance of the upper castes was used as a means to denounce them by the BLD so as to gain the support of OBCs. Hence, the alliance forged between BLD and the Jana Sangh, largely representing the interest of the upper castes, through the Janata Party between 1977-79 was only the result of political expedience. The divergent pulls were inherent, and that became a significant factor in

their split in 1979.

Since 1980, the Lok Dal, pursued their old strategy of consolidating their hold over their core support group. Ofcourse, they became more vociferous in highlighting the interests rural masses. But this did not seem to work, as is evident from their failure to gain many seats in 1984.

The support the rich peasantry received from the middle and Backward castes, alongwith section of Muslim votes failed to work in the 1984 elections to Lok Dal's advantage. This is mainly evident from Lok Dal's inability to mobilise the upper caste votes and that of OBC's by themselves. Only the Janata coalition with the erst while BLD and Jan Sangh could bring all these groups together to give them a winning mandate as in 1977. But, then, such a combination was fraught with an inherent conflict of interests between the upper castes and newly rising middle castes and the rich middle castes on the one hand and poor OBC's and

scheduled castes on the other.

As a result, the Lok Dal's mobilisation strategy, as in the case of the earlier BLD, succeeded most where there was a congruence of caste and economic interests, i.e., to the extent they wanted to achieve the economic interests of the rich middle castes through their political advancement. Such an identification prevented Lok Dal's consolidation of support base among the poorer OBC's and the scheduled castes. So also, attempts to bring in reservations for the Backward castes in U.P. has stalled chances of bringing the upper castes into its fold, despite its programmes and manifesto voicing the interests of the rich landed classes.

Another limitation in the mobilisation strategy of the Lok Dal emerges from the very composition of the middle and Backward castes comprising its core support group. Not only do these castes differ in their social status and have conflicting economic interests but are



also involved in rivalry on the social and political plane. Besides, the horizontal divisions present among these castes were well utilised by the Congress and other parties to split votes by fielding candidates from the same castes.

Thus, the horizontal and vertical differences among the various middle and backward castes and between them and the upper castes and scheduled castes seem to prove stronger than Lok Dal's effort to forge a united rural support base through an economic manifesto serving the rich peasantry as well as through kisan populism and the slogan of rural-urban divide. So also Lok Dal's programmatic contradiction evident in its support for reservations for backward castes, in an attempt to consolidate its base among the poorer backward castes too, brought it headlong in confrontation with the upper castes.

The tilt in Lok Dal's programmes towards the rich and middle peasantry drawn from the middle and Backward

castes reflects the advancement of their economic as well as political power. Their politicisation which has been initiated by the Lok Dal, including in its earlier form of BKD and BLD, only served to buttress their economic power further. Today, as a political force these groups have been attempting to plough into the political dominance of the upper castes in the state. On the other hand their increasing cohesion as well as political influence, combined with their economic power is giving them more leverage to inflict violence on the landless labour and the poor tenants, mostly drawn from the poorer OBCs and the scheduled castes. All this increased the social tension and conflicts in rural U.P. which spill into the arena of competitive power struggle. It is only in evolving a strategy that can balance these tensions and differences that Lok Dal can hope to consolidate its support base beyond its existing core groups and displace the Congress dominance in the state.

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