

## Chapter IV

### Emergence of Multiple Fragments: A study of Selected State Party Systems

The chapter aims to study some of the selected state party systems and locate some of the most significant immediate factors that led to the bifurcation of the Indian party system into two levels- national and state. Through the chapter attempts has been made to identify some of the features that exhibit the selected state party systems. The Indian party system as a whole exhibited a fragmented picture for itself by producing multiple state party systems more pronouncedly since 1967. The Indian party system stands bifurcated between central and state level leading to emergence of multiple fragments (each state having its specific party system inconsistent to the national party system). Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (1987) pointed through their chapter "*Decline of Congress Dominance and the Emergence of a Bifurcated Party System*" towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and state level with the 1984 election following which Congress was ousted out from power in most of the states and growth of a new party system. In 1999, Anindya Saha in his article "*The Indian Party System 1989-1999*" has as well indicated about the bifurcation of the Indian party system. The party system in the country reflects the socio-economic-political-cultural-communal-ethnic aspirations of India. Each state pursues its own pattern of political development amidst its own diverse settings and conditions. For long regionalism remained submerged under the tide of nationalism. Nationalism had swept the country as India was striving hard to achieve independence from the British Imperial authority. The need for nation-building post independence sidelined the regional aspirations for a while that facilitated the rule of Congress, the inheritor of the freedom struggle, at the centre as well as in the states (Chatterjee, p.12, 1998). However, constitutional grant of autonomy to the states in their respective spheres facilitated germination of political aspirations of the local leaders who in the name of vociferously expressing regional demands and aspirations wanted to occupy the helm of state mantle. Further the system of centralized federalism that makes the position of the centre vis-a-vis the state so over-riding invited resentment

from the state bosses<sup>1</sup>. The electorates tend to separate national issues from the state or local issue and they feel that the state-based parties can fulfill their local needs better considering their proximity to the local settings than the parties overlooking the national affairs at the national level. These are some of the prominent reasons that facilitated in the rise of multiple state party systems. Some other reasons such as factionalism within the umbrella Congress party, defection, *excesses* during the emergency and the rise of issue-based politics most particularly caste-based politics, post-*mandir* and Mandal politics since the late 1980s led to the bifurcation between the national and state level party system (Kashyap:1970, Noorani:1980, Saha:1999, Manor:2002, Arora:2003). From north to south to east till the west each state portrayed a distinct party system for itself. Hence through this chapter a naïve attempt has been made to study some selected multiple state party systems. Each state pursues its own pattern of political development amidst its own diverse settings and conditions. It is indeed a matter of interest because a single country possesses two variance of party system. The state level party system is characterized by a blending of bipolarity and multi polarity contest for power coupled with multiplicity of parties which continues to grow. The chapter also enlists the central features of the state party systems that have evolved since 1989. Besides, it also traces the factors that have contributed to the growth of the various state party systems in different regions of the country and have led to bifurcation of the party system between the national and state level. We also intend to look at the changes that are likely to occur at the state party systems with the state assembly elections. The newly formed political novice in the state plays a significant role in influencing and shaping of state party systems by either splintering votes or accumulating votes which subsequently either wrest or facilitates the chance of victory for the main contenders for power. Hence the study will see how the newly formed political novices in the state introduce changes in the state party systems.

The study of some of the selected state party system has significantly testified to the fact that the Indian states possess their own party system distinct from the central party system. The national party system is significantly distinct from the state party

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<sup>1</sup>For example DMK had resented against over centralizing tendencies and after coming to power constituted the Rajamannar Committee in 1969 to review the centre-state relationship and to strengthen and protect state autonomy in federal India and to make constitutional amendments to secure the maximum possible extent of autonomy for the state. See <http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/rajamannar.html>

systems. There was some level of uniformity between the two levels till 1967. States like Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland voted for non-Congress alternatives even during the undisputed hegemony of the Congress Party at the central and in almost the remaining state party systems. Since 1967 the incongruity has intensified when as many as nine states voted in favour of non-Congress SVD governments. The similar claims reflect in the writings of E. Sridharan (2002&2011) and Anindya Saha (1989) as well. States like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Orissa, Gujarat have two party system where Congress Party is not the sole contender for power. Some states on the contrary are characterized by a multi-party system where there exists stiff competition mainly between two parties whereas other political formations equally participate in the race to acquire power such as in case of the state of Tamil Nadu where the main contenders are DMK and AIADMK.

Uttar Pradesh since 1967 onwards has upheld the rise of political novices like Bharatiya Kranti Dal, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party to power in the state. Bihar has as well displayed a similar phenomenon since 1967 onwards by offering chances to political novices like Jan Kranti Dal, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Janata Dal (United) to acquire the rein of control of the state. Similarly, Assam and Maharashtra has also coroneted political novices like AGP and Shiv Sena which took birth on the plank of protest against economic deprivations and exploitation to power. Kerala and West Bengal is unique in a way as it saw the rule by Leftist Parties for over a considerable period of time. Kerala has established the trend of electing alternative fronts with every assembly elections. Recently with the 2011 assembly election, West Bengal ousted the 34 years of Left rule in the state and has placed the principal opposition party TMC to power in the hope of better tomorrow. Even Tamil Nadu has maintained a trend of swinging between two Dravidian parties but with the recent 2016 assembly polls it has put a halt to the trend by re-electing AIADMK to power for abiding well with welfare economics. States like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand which had fought for separate statehood to ensure development and free itself from cultural, economic exploitation in their specific region has also produced a distinct party system for itself by voting for alternative governments with every assembly election. These three states have shown how in present times the Indian party system is largely shaped by the parameters like politics of human development, performance (ability to translate rhetoric into action) and

populism (human development schemes and programmes). Hence, a naïve attempt has been made through this work to study these state party systems and enlist some of the features and trace the electoral journey of the political novices in these states.

## **Study of Selected State Party Systems**

This section discusses about some of the immediate reasons that led to bifurcation of the Indian party system and emergence of divergent state party systems. The chapter discusses some of the selected politically significant states in North, Central, North–East and South India such as Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The section deals with the some of the most immediate factors that led to the emergence and changes in the state party systems. It as well discusses the features of the state party systems and tries to show how birth of political novices such as Bharatiya Kranti Dal, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party, Jan Kranti Dal, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Kerala Congress within the state party system had led to reconfiguration and realignment of the state party system.

### **Uttar Pradesh**

Uttar Pradesh (UP) happens to be the most politically significant state in the country. It sends presently eighty members to the Parliament and therefore becomes imperative for any party to perform well in the state to capture power at the centre.<sup>2</sup> It is a significant state of the Hindi heartland The Indian National Congress (INC) retained its dominance in the state as the ruling party till the 1974 in a competitive multi-party state party system<sup>3</sup>. With the 1951 state assembly polls it had surpassed all the other parties and secured 388 seats of the 429 contested seats polling 47.93 percent of votes and 48.00 percent of seats. Socialist Party (SP) stood distant second by bagging just twenty seats of the 349 contested seats polling 12.03 percent of votes and 13.68

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<sup>2</sup>Census 2001 data on Population by Religious community. Out of 166197921 people from all religious communities in U.P 133979263 Hindus resided in Uttar Pradesh in comparison to 30740158 Muslims. (NSSO National Data Bank For Socio-Religious Categories).

<sup>3</sup> With the 1967 assembly election BKD led coalition government came to power led by Chaudhuri Charan Singh and again in 1970 BKD led coalition government came to power and remained in power from February 1970 till October 1970. See <http://uplegisassembly.gov.in/CHIEF%MINISTERS.HTM> (accessed on October 16, 2014 at 11:00 am),

percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The reason for such resounding victory were the party was the inheritor of the freedom struggle and was the then most organized party with a very sound organisational strength (Brass, 1997, p. 201). Lack of any strong opposition to the Congress party in the state too was an added advantage for the party that contributed further to its reasons for victory in the assembly polls. The state leadership was another reason that contributed towards the organisational strength of the party that kept the base of the party cemented in the state with their charismatic leadership qualities devoid of any self-motivated interests marked by high stature and esteem that steered the party through every odds.<sup>4</sup> Pandit Pant's name was a remarkable one in this regard who through his charismatic and focused leadership skills kept the popularity of the party intact in the state that contributed positively towards the electoral fortune of the party in the state. He had excellent political skills that enabled him to keep the opposition, the enemies and the dissidents at bay and in control. However, his departure from Uttar Pradesh state politics due to his inclusion in the central ministry in 1955 marked the end of the dominance of the party in the state as the majority party. His exit was replaced by the commencement of an era that was marked by factionalism, dissidence, defection and politics driven by self-motives. This was followed by a reduced number of seats and share of votes for the party in the state and finally Janata Party replacing the Congress party with the 1977 state election. The departure of Pandit Pant saw rise of two groups namely, the 'dissidents' who criticized the state administration and their leadership capabilities and the other being the 'ministerialist' group which protested against the frequent interference and dictum by the party organisation in the affairs of state administration (Brass, 1964, p-1040). The disruptive and disunited state organisation enabled the Congress rule to suffer a setback in the state. With the 1957 assembly polls INC secured 286 of the 430 contested seats with 42.42 percent of votes and 42.42 percent of seats as well. INC secured some 102 less seats in the 1957 polls in comparison to the 1951 assembly polls. Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) fetched only seven seats polling 9.48 percent of votes and 15.83 percent of seats whereas Praja Socialist Party (PSP) bagged only forty four seats polling 22.79 percent of votes and 14.47 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). However, with the 1962 assembly election the share of votes and seats declined for the party by 6.09 percent and 5.97 percent respectively. INC

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<sup>4</sup> For factionalism in Uttar Pradesh politics, See "Factionalism and the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh", Paul R. Brass, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 4, No. 9 (Sep., 1964), pp. 1039-1040.

secured 249 seats of the 429 seats polling 36.33 percent of votes and 36.45 percent of seats. Jana Sangh fetched some forty nine seats out of the 377 seats that it had contested polling 16.46 percent of votes and 18.72 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) won only thirty eight seats of the 288 seats with 11.52 percent of votes and 17.34 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The vacuum that was created with Pandit Pant's departure was not filled up by another able leader but rather was replaced by friction and factionalism. Rivalry among groups over who would capture the position of the chief minister and not 'governance' became the focal point of Uttar Pradesh politics since the late fifties. Stringent competition for power and position developed between the party workers that led to change of three new Congress chief ministers in quick succession. After Kamalapati Tripathi was defeated in the general election and the Chandra Bhan Gupta loyalists deserted Sampuranand, C.B Gupta himself became the Chief Minister of the state. Meanwhile, to arrest the growing powers of the chief ministers of the selected states Nehru endorsed the Kamraj plan. The undaunted powers of C.B Gupta were pruned but to keep his sway over the party Gupta nominated Mrs. Sucheta Kriplani as his successor (Brass, 1966, pp. 74-75). However, large scale defection by Charan Singh and his loyalists in 1967 converted C.B Gupta government into a minority government<sup>5</sup>.

### **Change in Political Discourse of Uttar Pradesh: Asendence of Politics of Identity**

Ultimately, a non-Congress coalition under the banner of Samyukta Vidayak Dal (SVD) government came to power in the state. In Uttar Pradesh, INC contested 425 seats but could bag just 199 seats polling 32.32 percent of votes and 32.20 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Hence it failed to win absolute majority in the state. The coalitional partners of Samyukht Vidayak Dal (SVD) namely, the BJS captured 98 seats, Sangatha Socialist Party (SSP) won 44seats, Communist Party India (CPI) secured 13 seats, Swatantra Party fetched 12 seats for itself and Republican Party of India (RPI) and PSP bagged 10 and 11 seats respectively (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The anti-Congress conglomeration formed the government under the Chief Ministership of

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<sup>5</sup> Congress preferred appointing C.B Gupta as the chief minister over Charan Singh. Later on, Sucheta Kriplani was preferred over him in 1963. Sucheta Kriplani did not even belong to the state of Uttar Pradesh. See Jafferlot, "*Religion, Caste and Politics in India*", 2010, p.436.

Charan Singh (a non-Brahmin) who had defected from the state Congress party with 16 other members (Brass, p.2087, 1993). Hence, the state party system became fragmented and bipolarized in nature and Congress no more remained as the Majority Party since 1967 assembly election till 1980. Since 1980 the competitive multi-party state party system witnessed partial restoration of INC as the largest party. However, since 1989 assembly election the UP state party system acquired a competitive multi-party bipolarized nature with the contest for power mainly oscillating between INC and Janata Dal. However with the 1991 assembly election the state party remained competitive multi-party bipolarized nature with the contest of power mainly oscillating primarily between Janata Dal and BJP. With the 1993 assembly election the state party system acquired a competitive multi-party nature with the dawn of coalition era in the state party system.

The first non-congress government lasted from 1967 to 1968. The SVD government collapsed due to various weaknesses which included inter-party conflict over the issue of sharing of power and portfolios, ideological disparity and it also lacked cohesion. The issue of giving recognition to Urdu as the second language in the state created a rift in the SVD coalition. The CPI supported it; however, the BJS firmly opposed it due to its own ideological constraints. The other issues which destabilized the longevity of the Charan Singh-led SVD government were the issues of procurement of food grains and the issue of abolition of land revenue towards which Charan Singh himself had reservation. The SVD government experienced threats from the high handedness of the BJS and the SSP leader Raj Narain who tried to exercise an assertive role in the SVD state government. Eventually, the government's tyrannical role in use of State Police to curb down agitations, illegal detention of government employees were some of the issues that led CPI and SSP desert the SVD ministry. Finally, allocation of lesser important departments to Jan Sangh ministers by Charan Singh invited resentment from the BJS party leaders who along with the SSP leaders demanded for the resignation of the chief minister. The Swatantra Party, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, the Republicans and the Independents although continued to support Charan Singh but he had to succumb to the demand of the BJS and resign as the chief minister (Brass, p.1186, 1968). It was followed by a Congress government under C.B Gupta which lasted for a year. Again Charan Singh returned to head a government in the state but with Congress as its ally. Another non-Congress coalition came to power

in the State led by T.N Singh. Congress restored its position as the ruling party in the state in 1971 headed by Kamalapati Tripathi. The frequent changes/alternations in the government suggest that the electorates in the state were highly dissatisfied with the governments coming to power because of their non-performance and their inability to deliver enhanced services. The personal motives of the rulers in the nature of power, status, position, wealth invited electoral losses for the party in power that led to tumbling of series of governments.

Besides, rise of smaller parties like Jan Congress, Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) enabled voters to exercise greater choices. Moreover, rise of Jan Sangh also led to the decline in the share of votes and seats of the Congress party. The Jan Sangh increased its share in the number of seats from seven in the 1957 state election to ninety nine seats with the 1967 election. The mobilization on the issue of banning cow slaughter during the 1960s, rising prices of essential commodities, bad monsoons, food shortage, strikes by government employees and teachers over rising prices and in demand of raising dearness allowances, administrative corruptions, etc. grossly sealed the fate of the Congress party in the state of Uttar Pradesh (Singh,1971,pp.311-313). Although, the Congress-led central government adopted large-scale industrialisation policy with the second five year plan but UP remained deprived from reaping benefits from it as it failed to witness much industrialisation. Agricultural development was not satisfactory (Roy, 1971, p. 99). With the growing trend of factionalism in Congress Uttar Pradesh state unit the dissatisfaction among the electorates increased manifold that led to fluctuations in voter's verdict. Defection, factionalism contributed towards rising of political instability in the state since the exit of Pandit Pant from the state politics till 1971 when Kamalapati Tripathy returned back to power in the state under the Congress single party rule<sup>6</sup>. The frequent rise and fall of state governments in UP and sporadic imposition of President's rule in the state led to the conduct of

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<sup>6</sup>There was rise in trend of support of the Indira-led Congress party in the country. Following the 1971 Lok Sabha polls Congress almost swept the polls of all the state with aberrations such as in Tamil Nadu where DMK emerged victorious. Her populist strategies paid dividends for the party. The *garibi hatao* (remove poverty) slogan, her populist strategy of wading through crowds and addressing rallies and vigorous campaigning, reaching to the common masses, especially women of the rural areas soared the popularity of the Congress (I) in the country. People of the country saw hope in their new leader and reposed faith in her to witness substantial developments in all walks of their life. The party received support from the upper elite classes such as the Rajputs, Brahmins as well among the landless, rural poor, scheduled caste. Congress allotted housing and cultivating sites to the SCs abolished forced labour and established Small Farmers Development Agency which increased popularity among these sections in the society.

mid-term polls in the state in order to restore political stability in the state. In 1969 state election INC emerged as the largest party with 211 seats of the 424 seats polling 33.69 percent of votes and 33.78 percent of seats. BJS bagged 46 seats of the 397 seats polling 17.93 percent of votes and 19.27 percent of seats, SSP secured only 33 seats of the 258 seats with 7.28 percent of votes 12.86 percent of seats. The BKD with this election emerged as the second largest party with 98 seats and 21.29 percent of votes and 22.41 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Formation of BKD led to splintering of the Congress votes, although a Congress-led state government came to power in the state under the leadership of C.B Gupta. With 1974 election its performance improved and it bagged 106 seats with 21.22 percent of votes and 22.53 percent of seats and INC emerged as the leading party with 215 seats polling 32.25 percent of votes and 34.04 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) was formed in 1969 by Charan Singh, a former Congressman. It was a party which primarily mobilized based on agrarian issue and was a 'political novice' in the state during that period. After Charan Singh defected from the Congress party in 1967 he took up the causes of middle and small sized peasantry and mobilized it to gain popularity. He created a new base of cultivating caste comprising of Ahir, Jat, Gujjar and the Rajput for himself to sustain himself in the state politics. He deserted the INC over differences (policy issues) with C.B Gupta who was the chief minister of the state since 1957. He vehemently protested against the policies of large-scale industrialisation, urbanisation and consumerism for the urban areas adopted by the then Nehru-led Congress central government and endorsed by the Gupta-led state government. He stood for development of small-scale industries and demanded for devising policies that would generate employment through it. He stood for abolition of zamindari system and insisted farmers should hold lands on their own and demanded for increased investment in agriculture. Hence, he found support among the middle and small size peasantry class (Pai, 2013, pp.111-112). After forming the party representing the agrarian issues in 1969, he contested election in 1969 assembly polls and emerged as the second largest by securing 98 seats of the 402 seats polling 21.23 percent of votes and percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With the next assembly polls BKD's tally increased and it bagged 106 seats of the 396 seats polling 22 percent of votes and 22.53 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Hence the entry of BKD, a political novice, into the

electoral arena led to splintering of votes of the Congress although in both the assembly polls of 1969 and 1974 Congress emerged as the largest party and formed government in the state. In 1969 BKD could occupy constituencies like Noorpur, Dhampur, Bijnor, Najibabad, Chandpur, Kanth, Hasanpur, Amroha, Ganeshwari, Sambhal, Bahjoi, Kundarki, Shahabad, Bisauli, Shahswan, Faridpur, Baraeli City, etc. which were earlier own by INC. With 1974 assembly election it could retain seats like Chanpur, Kanth, Hasanpur, Faridpur, Unnao, Sahaswar, Sambhal, Bahjoi, Bisauli, etc. which were earlier won by INC (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

However, with the 1977 state election Uttar Pradesh elected a non-Congress alternative namely, Janata Party which secured 352 seats of the 422 seats polling 47.76 percent of votes and 48.04 percent of seats. INC gave an abysmally poor performance in the election and its number of seats was reduced to double digits. It secured only 47 seats of the 395 seats with 31.94 percent of votes and 34.53 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Janata Party could emerge as the alternative following the general atmosphere of anti-Congressism in the country due to series of crises such as food crisis, rising prices following oil crisis due to Arab-Israel war of 1973, rising discontent of the general populace over the underperformance of Congress (I) government, and most significantly the excesses<sup>7</sup> that was committed by Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of the country by imposing emergency under Art. 352 to curb the growing discontentment over the Congress rule in the country implanted the death knell for the party and led to growing popularity of Janata Party (JNP) which was formed of Congress (O), Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party, Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), Congress For Democracy and the Socialist Party with the slogan of “Save Democracy” (Joshi- Desai 1978, p.1104)<sup>8</sup>. Apart from the excesses that was committed by the Indira-led Congress government at the national level various other reasons as well contributed towards the loss of Congress popularity in the state. One such reason for the loss of Congress popularity in the state was the formation of Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD)<sup>9</sup> towards the end of 1974 through the conglomeration of several parties such as the BKD, the Swatantra Party, the Utkal Congress, and the

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<sup>7</sup> See Norman D. Palmer, “*India in 1975: Democracy in Eclipse*”, Asian Survey, Vol. 16, No. 2, A Survey of Asia in 1975: Part II (Feb., 1976), pp. 95-110.

<sup>8</sup> See W. H. Morris-Jones, “*Whose Emergency-India's or Indira's?*”, The World Today, Vol. 31, No. 11 (Nov., 1975), pp. 451-461.

<sup>9</sup> Formation of BLD was significant as it indicated the diversion of UP politics into the quota politics from *kisan* politics. Under Raj Narain and Charan Singh's influence SSP and BKD merged to form BLD with Charan Singh as its President.

Socialist Party that led to significant erosion of votes for Congress in the state. In 1977, this very organization combined itself with the Jan Sangh to form Janata Party (JNP). This facilitated in the rise of support base of the JNP across the length and breadth of the country. BLD's support base included the Ahirs, Jats, Kurmirs, Bhumihars, middle and rich peasantry. Another significant blow came to the Congress when some of the significant leaders of the Uttar Pradesh Congress deserted it. Jagjivan Ram, a senior leader and the leading leader of the Scheduled Caste community, H.N Bahuguna, the former Congress Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Nandini Satpathy resigned from Indira Congress and formed Congress For Democracy Party (CFD) and entered into an alliance with the Janata Party<sup>10</sup>. In the 1977 state election formation of BLD and CFD led to massive splintering of Congress's vote share and this facilitated the electoral victory of Janata Party in the state leading to the realignment of the state party system. The 1977 assembly polls reduced Congress party to the position of the opposition party in the state legislature.

The Scheduled Castes and the Muslims deserted Congress as well because of the excesses that was committed by the State government and by Mr. Sanjay Gandhi, son of Mrs. Indira Gandhi which included atrocities such as demolition of squatter houses, forced resettlements, killing of Muslims in Muzaffarnagar and the call by Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid to vote for JNP led to substantial erosion of votes of the Congress party. The issue of forced sterilization campaign that was carried out under the fanatic influence of Sanjay Gandhi further maligned the image of the Congress party and it finally stood defeated with the 1977 state election to the legislative assembly of Uttar Pradesh. It was reported that villagers were dragged to sterilization camps and were forcibly made to undergo through the process of sterilization. National Population Policy was adopted in 1976 to implement drastic measures to contain population. Sanjay Gandhi enunciated five point agenda which included family planning as its objective besides tree planting, abolition of caste and dowry, eradication of illiteracy and slum clearance as well. He envisaged to modernize India and therefore adopted these five points. His vehicle for implementing these five points was the Youth Congress. "The city needed to be made clean: Sanjay removed the slums and planted trees".

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<sup>10</sup> See, Malhotra Inder, "*Indira Gandhi's nadir*", The Indian Express, August 18, 2014 (accessed on October, 17, 2014 at 12:30 pm).

The sterilization procedures were carried out with negligible expertise and care which led to cases where patients were reported to have died out of infection. Incidents of police firing were also reported to control clashes between reluctant villagers and state government officials. Slum dwellers were threatened to undergo the process of sterilization or face dire consequences such as demolition of houses. The Shah Commission was in fact appointed by the Janata government to investigate the extent of atrocities committed during emergency period in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Such anti-democratic measures made Congress unpopular and contributed positively towards the electoral fate of the Janata Party. The people of India went to the polls in 1977 only to reject anarchy and animosity and restore democracy. BLD which was formed during 1974 after dismantling Charan Singh's former party, the BKD was able to garner vote for itself and for the Janata Party because of the popularity of Charan Singh in the Upper Doab region. The dominance by the Upper castes such as the Brahmins and the Rajputs in this region acted as a catalyst in garnering support from the prominent cultivating caste, the Jats for the Janata Party. The Jats were apathetic towards the Congress because of the economic policy of Nehru which favoured capitalization, industrialization, mechanized farming and was less in favour of investment in agriculture or in providing concessions to the cultivating castes. Charan Singh was a Jat which was an added advantage for the party and hence drew massive support from this section of the society in UP. The Jan Sangh attracted votes from the upper castes such as the Brahmins, the Rajputs, the Kayasthas and the Vaishyas for its anti-muslims rhetoric and beliefs and the SSP merged with BKD which was later reformed as BLD under the leadership of Charan Singh enabled Janata Party to draw vote from the Ahir, the largest middle cultivating caste in the central and eastern districts of UP (Brass, 1981, pp. 5-16).

However, the Janata Party lacked vision and the zeal to deliver services to the people. It got riddled with factionalism and got divided into JNP (JP), JNP (SC) led by Charan Singh, JNP (SR) led by Raj Narain. Discordant over the august post of the Prime Minister at the central level led to the split in Janata Party<sup>11</sup>. Hence, JNP failed to retain its popularity among the common masses and was voted out with next election. The people of India expected JNP to emerge as a better alternative to

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<sup>11</sup> Jayaprakash and J.B Kripalani selected Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister of the Janata-led government. See Malhotra Inder, "The Janata's Collapse", The Indian Express, September 2, 2014 (accessed on October 17, 2014 at 2:00pm).

Congress considering the fact that they had portrayed a very positive image of a party who stood for democracy, rights of the people and one who believes in better governance. The internal bickering and dissensions at the central level among the leaders like Morarji Desai, Raj Narain, and Charan Singh jeopardized the prospect of JNP in the country.<sup>12</sup> Conflict between state bosses over the struggle for post of eminence (post of chief minister and state leaders) and control over the Janata organisation between Charan Singh and the Jan Sangh group further eroded the credibility of the assorted Janata Party. Simultaneously, its electoral fate in the state level suffered a nosedive and with the 1980 assembly polls it was ousted out from power. Moreover, the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes as well deserted the Janata Party with the 1980 assembly election because Urdu was not given due recognition by the Janata-led central government and Jagjivan Ram was not nominated as the Prime Minister which disappointed the Scheduled Castes to a great extent (Brass, 1981, pp.12-16). INC won 309 seats of the 424 seats polling 37.65 percent of votes and 37.76 percent of seats. BJP bagged only 11 seats whereas JNP drew a blank, JNP (JP) secured 4 seats and JNP (SC) 59 seats and JNP (SR) won 4 seats only. Lok Dal (LKD) bagged only 4 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The failure of Janata experiment revived the electoral fortune of Congress (Indira) in the state and the 1985 state assembly election also brought the Congress (I) back to power. It secured 269 seats of the 425 seats polling 39.25 percent of votes and 39.25 percent of seats. JNP secured 20 seats and BJP and LKD improved its performance and won 16 seats and 84 seats respectively (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

However, the Congress could not remain in power for long in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Congress-led government was soon replaced by Janata Dal-led government in the state with the 1989 assembly polls. The defamation of Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress (I) government at the central level spoiled the chances of Congress (I) coming back to power in the state and hence with the 1989 assembly polls it was Janata Dal Party that emerged victorious in the state by securing 208 seats polling 35.27 percent of seats and 29.71 percent of seats. BJP bagged 54 seats and INC won 94 seats. BSP, a dalit-based party and a new entrant in the UP politics secured 13 seats with 9.41 percent of votes and 10.72 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

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<sup>12</sup> The election of Morarji Desai as the prime minister of the 1977 Janata government by Jayprakash Narayan led to the birth of discomfort and protest by leaders like Raj Narain, Charan Singh who were equally aspirants for the post.

The main plank on which the Janata Dal had come to power was its crusade against the corruption charges slammed against the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress (I) government following its involvement in the Bofor's scam. The tide of anti-corruption campaign has swept the entire country and has influenced the assembly poll results as well (Frankel, pp. 523-525, 1990). However, Janata Dal could not continue in power for long and was replaced by BJP which came to power with the 1991 assembly polls by securing 221 seats. Janata Dal could bag just 92 seats. INC won only 46 seats, Janata Party fetched 34 seats only, BSP could win just 12 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

The mobilisation in the name of *mandir-masjid* was at its peak in the country and riding on the saffron wave BJP-led Kalyan Singh government came to power in the state in June 1991. However, the BJP-led Ramjanambhoomi movement ousted the BJP-led Kalyan Singh government out of power. Kalyan Singh has been quoted describing the demolition of Babri mosque as an "act of God"<sup>13</sup>. President's rule was imposed in the state for the BJP ruled state government was accused of not taking any appropriate measures to prevent and pacify the fanatic outrage in the disputed site of Ayodhya where the *karsevaks* carried out the horrifying act of demolition of the mosque in order to create a Ram Temple in the disputed site on December 06, 1992<sup>14</sup>. The Kalyan Singh-led state administration was a mute spectator to the entire frenzied incident of cultural nationalism<sup>15</sup>. BJP could not cross the halfway mark and the SP-BSP combine kept it out of power. BJP failed to forge any post-poll alliance due to its communal image. The fundamentalist ideologies of the party invited unpopularity for the party in the state.

Moreover, new political formations or novices such as Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) splintered the vote of BJP as well as the Congress. The latter was already in the state of decline in the state that created a space for other political parties in the state. Janata Party and Janata Dal could not cut a niche for itself in the state because of its heterogeneous composition, dissensions, internal bickering

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<sup>13</sup> "Act of God: Kalyan Singh", The Hindu, December 3, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> On December 06, 1992 at the disputed site a Karseva was organised at the site ( a voluntary service by the devotees for building the Ram temple).The situation in Ayodhya became tensed and thousands gathered on the site to demolish the mosque and a make shift temple was placed there. This incident was followed by clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims in many parts of the country. Riots broke out in various parts of the country. On December 16, 1992 the Liberhan Commission was set up by the central government to probe the circumstances that led to the demolition of the Babri masjid.

<sup>15</sup> Ranjit Bhushan, "Pile of Evidence", [www.outlookindia.com](http://www.outlookindia.com), September 22, 1997.

over powerful portfolios, lack of coherent ideologies and programmes. The political formations offered minimum governance in their bid to pursue more power.

## **Backward Caste Trumps Upward Caste**

*Kisan* (peasant) politics was gradually getting replaced by ‘politics based on caste’ that set upper or forward caste against the lower caste<sup>16</sup>. This led to the creation of a new vote bank comprising of upwardly mobile backward castes such as Dalits, Yadavs, etc. They tried to achieve social mobility through access to power. There was rise of many other identity-based parties since the 1960s such as Bharatiya Lok Dal, Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), etc. and rise of many prominent backward caste leaders like Charan Singh, Devi Lal, Mulayam Singh Yadav, and Laloo Prasad Yadav and in the later years Mayawati. Hence, there was erosion of Congress support base in the Hindi Heartland states such as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh as lower rung leaders were fast replacing the elite upper caste leaders. Charan Singh, too, changed his course of politics and resorted to empower the lower caste section economically, socially, politically and educationally. In his earlier years in politics Charan Singh had always mobilized for the causes of the cultivating caste as opposed to Nehru’s industrial policies in order to gain popularity and bag electoral gains. Although Charan Singh was a Jat by caste but he have never exploited it for electoral advantages because they occupied a very small section of the population in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Since the mid 1970s Charan Singh under the banner of Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) mobilized the populace of the state around the notion of ‘quota’ politics. Charan Singh’s association with the Socialists parties such as the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and the Socialist Party motivated him to rally for the backward caste. The Socialists for long (since 1962) have demanded for reservation of 60 percent of the administrative positions and seats in the legislatures for the backward caste and classes such as the Ahirs and the Kurmis (Weiner, 1967, p.86). Politics based on agrarian agendas were fast losing its vigour and vitality in the wake of technological revolution and rise of “identity” based politics. Aspirations of the people in general were rising and they were yearning for development and progress in

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<sup>16</sup> For the brief understanding of the rise in low caste movement See Christopher Jafferlot, “*Sanskritization vs. Ethnicization in India*” in “Religion, Caste and Politics in India”, 2010, pp. 454-458. Also See Christopher Jafferlot, “*The Rise of the Other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt*” in Religion, Caste and Politics in India”, 2010, pp. 459-460.

every spheres of life. Charan Singh persuaded the Janata government of 1977 at the centre to constitute a backward commission to ensure reservation policies for the otherwise backward section of the society to enable these sections to have access to better provisions like education, employment, etc. Charan Singh as the Deputy Prime Minister during the Janata regime took initiative in appointing the second backward class commission known as the Mandal Commission with B.P Mandal as its chairman which recommended for the reservation of 27 per cent of the seats for the backward classes other than Scheduled Castes and Tribes comprising of both Hindus and Muslims. The Commission submitted its report in 1980 but the report remained unheeded by both the 1980 Indira-led and 1985 Rajiv-led central government. Hence, it invited unpopularity for the Congress party that had failed to cut a niche among these section of the society (Jafferelot, 2010, pp.434-438). It in turn facilitated the victory of Janata Dal which had expressed its desire to implement the Mandal Commission Report for ameliorating the social backwardness of these sections of the society. Janata Dal comprised of incongruent political parties such as the Jan Morcha, the Janata Party, the Lok Dal, the Congress (S), the Telegu Desam, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, and the Assam Gana Parishad (Chander, 2004, p.34). The existence of Lok Dal led to splintering of votes of the Congress party. The rise of quota politics or the rise of the OBCs as an electorally viable category since the late 1980s in the country as well as in Uttar Pradesh meant growing prominence of the Yadavs and the Kurmis. The Yadavs produced significant leaders representing the OBC mobilization which included prominent names such as Sharad Yadav, Laloo Prashad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav. B.P Mandal himself was a Yadav by caste.

Mulayam Singh Yadav in fact used his caste to gain popularity and he became the chief minister of the state of Uttar Pradesh twice from December 1989 to June 1991 and again from December 1993 to June 1995 (<http://uplegislativeassembly.gov.in>) and finally founded his own political party, the Samajwadi Party after breaking away from Janata Dal that represented the other backward castes on October 4th, 1992. Samajwadi Party, a political novice, made a place in UP politics after the Lok Dal lost its essence with the death of Charan Singh in 1987 and the party eventually suffered a split and got divided between Lok Dal (A) and Lok Dal (B) under the leadership of Ajit Singh, son of Charan Singh and Devi Lal respectively. The OBC phenomenon was brilliantly exploited by the Samajwadi Party to create a base for itself in the state

at the expense of the elitist approach of the Congress party that was mostly vocal for the upper caste and could not offer any policies or packages for the amelioration of these sections of the society. Samajwadi Party stood for communal harmony, socialism, equality, democracy and upliftment of the backwards, Muslims and women ([www.samajwadiparty.in/history.html](http://www.samajwadiparty.in/history.html)). V.P Singh gave the slogan 'Braham leave the country' (Jafferlot, 2010, p.497). He was able to organise the OBCs under a broad category and provide them with a political identity and woo them with numerous affirmative policies to enable them to promote themselves economically and educationally. The trend remained unaltered since then and the OBCs still continues to remain a potential electoral section of the society in the state of UP as well as in the country. During his first tenure as the chief minister in 1989 Mulayam Singh Yadav announced a 15 percent reservation of seats in the state administration for the OBCs and later on in 1993 during his second tenure as the chief minister of the state the quota was raised to 27 percent (Jafferlot, 2010, p.476). The Yadavs benefitted most from his policies than any other lower castes. His government had more OBCs and Dalits representatives; his government gave preference to the candidates from the Yadav communities in case of recruitment to the state services as well, contributing to the disadvantage of the Kurmis, Lodhs, Muslims and the Dalits (Jafferlot, 2010. p.477). The policy of favouritism pursued by Mulayam Singh towards the Yadavs antagonized Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the party alienated itself from the Samajwadi party. Both the party had formed an alliance and was able to form the government with the 1993 assembly election. The SP secured 109 seats and 17.49 percent of votes. BSP won 67 seats and 11.12 percent of votes. Janata Dal could secure only 27 seats. Congress's share was reduced to only 28 seats. Although BJP bagged 177 seats and 33.30 percent of votes but the alliance between SP-BSP disabled BJP to form government at the state (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). It was a pro-lower caste and anti-upper caste alliance. The two political novices, SP and BSP prevented both Congress and BJP from coming to power in the state.

BSP was formed in April 1984 by Kanshi Ram. It was formed with the goal for social transformation and economic emancipation of the Bahujan Samaj which comprised of SCs, STs, OBCs, religious minorities, the poor, the small and medium traders (<http://www. bspindia.org>). It was formed to ensure the upliftment of these communities who were the victims of the unjust *manuwadi* social system. The party

draws inspiration from the philosophy of Dr. B.R Ambedkar. Its traditional support base is among the Dalits. The party baton was later on handed over to Mayawati on December 15, 2001 by Kanshi Ram as his health deteriorated in a rally of BSP at the Lakshman Mela ground in Lucknow, UP. In 2003 she was made the national President ([http://www. bahujansamajparty.in](http://www.bahujansamajparty.in)).

In mid-1995 after two years of forming government in the state of UP in alliance with SP, BSP withdrew its support from SP. Since then they have parted ways and have remained political rivals. The relation between the two worsened because of the fanatic ‘Yadavization’ of the state services, of the party apparatus and of the government by Mulayam Singh Yadav. Moreover, the OBCs has always tried to suppress the Dalits who were mostly agricultural labourers who mostly work for the former and they even had to suffer atrocities and discriminations. The Dalits failed to give colours to their aspirations of scaling the social ladder. Mayawati sought the support of BJP to become Chief Minister on June 03, 1995. After Mayawati withdrew her support from the Mulayam Singh-led government she was kept under house arrest and was harassed by Mulayam Singh Yadav supporters at the State Guest House in Lucknow. She had to remain confined within the guest house for hours before being rescued by BJP workers and was then immediately sworn in as the chief minister on June 03, 1995. The BSP-BJP alliance was primarily forged to culminate the arrogance of the OBCs, primarily the Yadavs under the politics of favouritism pursued by Mulayam Singh Yadav in order to retain and consolidate his political support base. The upper castes were relatively dominant in the socio-economic and political arenas and this dominance left the Dalits relatively without a voice. The backward caste retaliated against the dominance of the Brahmans, banyas, and the thakurs whose interests were well represented and protected in the society under Congress rule since the time of independence. The formation of SP and BJP government in the state in the later years still left these repressed and oppressed section of these society underrepresented. However, with the formation of the BSP-BJP government in 1995 which for the first time since independence placed a Dalit woman at the apex of the state introduced significant changes in the status of the Dalits in the society. After BSP assumed power Mayawati’s policies rendered the Dalits with more power, elevated their status and they had a leader to represent their agendas. However, the agendas and initiatives were mainly targeted towards the betterment of the Dalits and

it failed to adequately represent the other sections such as the upper castes, the OBCs or the Muslims. After Mayawati assumed power she made several upper caste work under her and assigned many Dalits with important ministries, secretaries as well as appointed them as District Magistrates and Superintendent of Police, village headman, Member of Parliament (MPs) and Member of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs), etc. (Kumar, 2003, p.3870). Since 1995 many 'patta' owner too acquired temporary rights of their lands after Mayawati initiated land reforms in the state. She had distributed land among the landless Dalits and the most backward castes (MBCs). During Mayawati's tenure, she could curb crime in the state with heavy hands and had put large number of criminals behind the bars (Kumar, 2003, p.3870). These measures boosted the morale of the depressed section of the society and saved them from humiliation inflicted upon them by the upper castes. It aroused the self-respect, confidence and gave expression to their increased consciousness to these otherwise deprived section of the society. These qualitative changes that was introduced by the Mayawati-led coalition government consolidated her base in the state but made BJP apprehensive which had primarily drawn support from the upper-caste, urban Hindus, small and middle businessmen and Hindu traders, cultivators, etc. (Hansen & Jaffrelot,1996,p.4). The BJP became concerned about the partial policies of favouritism of Mayawati that she had started implementing after assuming power for the Dalits and the SCs. She adopted numerous programmes for the Dalits exclusively for their upliftment which included financial aid to the dalit students, financial assistance to Dalit families during marriage, sickness, building hostels for the dalits students, assigning employment to Dalit women under the employment programme, initiating housing projects for the dalits besides providing drinking water, electricity, toilets, temples and schools for the Dalit students, etc. She adopted the Ambedkar Village Programme in villages with 50 percent Dalit population with enhanced services like improved roads, drainage system, rural electrification, etc. (Pai, 2004, pp.1145-1146). These initiatives were one-sided programmes that facilitated the development of a particular section of the society depriving the remaining of development in terms of health, education, infrastructure, education, employment, etc. Her targeted populist programmes had also inflicted huge strain upon the state exchequer. In October, 1995 the BJP withdrew its support from BSP and fresh election was announced after a short period of the President's rule (<http://uplegislativeassembly.gov.in>). A fresh election was declared in October 1996

following which again a BSP-BJP led coalition government again came to power. BJP bagged 174 seats and could not secure absolute majority on its own. Therefore, it had to forge an alliance with the BSP. BSP had secured 67 seats and SP had bagged 110 seats and INC could bag just 33 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The alliance of BJP with BSP was mainly an anti-Congress and anti-SP alliance. Mayawati became the chief minister again with the support of BJP and entered into a pact with BJP under which the post of Chief Minister would be rotated between the two parties after every six months. But following a clash between BSP and BJP members in the Assembly in September 21, 1997 Mayawati resigned. Kalyan Singh came to power following the scheduled transfer of power<sup>17</sup>. He remained in power till November 11, 1999. He was succeeded by Ram Prakash Yadav in November, 1999.

Since 1990s almost for a decade the state of Uttar Pradesh was grappled by political instability, unstable and incongruent coalitions. The series of government that came to power was less concerned about ensuring development to the masses and were more concerned about acquiring power. Caste became a significant barometer to acquire power in the state of Uttar Pradesh which comprised of a mixed demography. Politics persuaded in the name of identity and not governance led to decay and fragmentation of the political system. Mushrooming of numerous political parties made the party system asymmetrical. Verdict became uncertain and produced hung assemblies and incongruent coalitions. This led to steep decline in political governance and rise in political impasse, social inequality and disharmony. This contributed towards the downslide of the state in terms of prosperity and development. The coalition partners had only strove hard to gain share in power. Favouritism became the order of the day as every government attempted to favour their social group on whose support it has come to power so as to consolidate and expand its base as well retain their support for the next assembly polls. The trend of ‘Yadavization’ and Mayawati’s beneficial or preferential policies to Dalits are best of such examples.

In 2002 assembly polls the performance of BJP declined and it could secure just 88 seats. SP could bag 143 seats, BSP won 98 seats and INC could fetch for itself 25 seats only (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The entry of political novices like SP and BSP eroded the vote bank of the INC in the state. The partial policies of Mayawati government and the dissensions between the coalition partners eroded the electoral

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<sup>17</sup> Ranjit Bhusan and Ishan Joshi, “*Saffron Setback*”, [www.outlookindia.com](http://www.outlookindia.com), September 22, 1997.

credibility of the parties and this contributed positively towards the electoral fortune of Samajwadi Party. Ultimately, Mulayam Singh Yadav formed a coalition government comprising of Congress, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Ajit Singh, Rashtriya Kranti Party (RPK) of Kalyan Singh, CPI (M), Samajwadi Janata Party-Rashtriya (SJP-R), Janata Party (JP), National Loktantrik Party (NLP)<sup>18</sup> of Mohammad Arshad Khan and many Independents.

Mulayam Singh had distributed tickets to Brahmins, thakurs, baniyas besides retaining its traditional bases of OBCs and Muslims (Outlook: 2002). The VHP had organised the *chetvani yatra* to reinvoke the feeling of Hindutva with its undying pangs of desire for building the Ram temple in Ayodhya to reconsolidate the base of BJP in the state but the gathering attracted few people testifying the fact that the issue has lost electoral relevance. Neither did BJP's MBCS (Most backward caste) and MDCs (Maha Dalits) reservation policy card produced the wonder it was supposed to produce for the party, on the contrary made its core voters, the Hindus apprehensive. BJP has described SP as anti-nationalist for the latter has opposed the passage of Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) and resisted ban on Student's Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). However, nothing could save BJP from the poll debacle. The Muslims have deserted the Bharatiya Janata Party for its anti-Muslim ideology. BSP has earlier allied with BJP and this made the Muslim desert it as it questioned the secular credentials of BSP. Moreover, the emergence of few novices like Rashtriya Kranti Party of Kalyan Singh splintered the vote of BJP and the formation of Apna Dal, a party representing the interest of the Kurmis also splintered the vote of the SP and BSP. However, SP emerged as the largest party but was not able to secure absolute majority on its own. Neither BSP nor BJP was willing to forge an alliance with SP. Allying with Congress was not sufficient enough for SP to form a government<sup>19</sup>. Hence, due to a stalemate situation the Governor of the state recommended a President's rule in the state and no party was in the position to form in the state<sup>20</sup>. With the 2002 assembly polls no party was able to garner absolute majority and the 2002 electoral verdict produced a Hung assembly. The SP was able to draw support for itself and emerge as the largest party due to extensive campaign

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<sup>18</sup> It was formed in 1995 and was working amongst the Muslim minority community. It could win a single seat from Deoria in the 2002 assembly polls (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

<sup>19</sup> "Uncertainty in U.P, SP single largest party", The Hindu, February 25, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> "Governor Recommends President's Rule in U.P", The Hindu, March 07, 2002.

trail by its party chief and organisational skills besides employing innovative strategies such as rallying with star icon Amitabh Bachchan who was able to draw huge crowd for the party. SP distributed free bicycle. Moreover, 800 cinema halls were used, besides, 50 video *raths* and hundreds of theatre artistes were employed to screen the failures of the former government of Rajnath Singh<sup>21</sup>. Rajnath Singh succeeded Ram Prakash Gupta in 2000. After Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand) was carved out of Uttar Pradesh the Gupta ministry was reduced to a minority government. Gupta cited ill-health as his reason for resignation and declared that the BJP state unit required a young, vibrant leadership to steer the party. Rajnath Singh was chosen by BJP central leadership as the new Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh along with 85 other MLAs on October 28, 2000<sup>22</sup>. Rajnath Singh government was accused of loopholes such as corruption charges; his administration and countless welfare schemes led to financial troubles for the state and were coupled with poor law and order situation in the state. Prior to the mandatory vote under a substantive motion over the Gujarat violence in Lok Sabha, Mayawati staked claim to form the government in U.P with the support of BJP, Loktantrik Congress Party, Lok Janshakti Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal, Janata Dal (U) and few Independents. No fresh election was held. Earlier SP had failed to form the government in the state despite being the largest party as it could not muster support of other parties. It was opportunistic unholy alliance which was forged by BJP in return of assurance of the BSP to vote against the opposition sponsored motion on Godhra carnage and Gujarat violence<sup>23</sup>. The Mayawati-led BSP-BJP coalition government remained in power from May 2002 till August 2003. Differences in opinion cropped between BJP and BSP over the Taj Heritage Corridor Project in Agra that entailed construction in the vicinity of the Taj Mahal. Mr. Jagmohan, the then Union Minister for Tourism and Cultural Affairs accused Mayawati-led government of flouting the norms related to the conservation of the historical monument, the Taj Mahal. The Rs. 175 crore Taj Heritage Corridor scam was under the investigation of CBI<sup>24</sup>. The accusation infuriated Mayawati and she demanded dismissal of Jagmohan from the Union ministry. Following this demand of Mayawati, a section of BJP MPs from Uttar Pradesh after consulting the

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<sup>21</sup> See Mukherjee Sutapa, “*Saffron taste fades*”, Outlook, Feb. 04, 2002. [www.outlook.com](http://www.outlook.com), (accessed on 17 February, 2015 at 2:14 pm).

<sup>22</sup> “*Rajnath Singh retains Gupta ministry*”, The Hindu, October 28, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> “*Mayawati to be sworn in on May 03*”, The Hindu, April 30, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> “*Mayawati okays Taj Project*”, The Hindu, August 30, 2003.

central leadership decided to withdraw support from the Mayawati-led government<sup>25</sup>. Earlier Ajit Singh of RLD had already withdrawn five of its minister from the Mayawati-led BJP-BSP coalition government<sup>26</sup>. Hence, SP along with its allies came to power and remained in office till May, 2007<sup>27</sup>.

In 2007 assembly polls BJP secured 51 seats, BSP secured 206 seats, SP bagged 97 seats, RLD won 10 seats only and INC bagged 25 seats only (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). BSP enjoyed a clean sweep in the assembly poll with 206 seats in a House of 403 with an absolute majority<sup>28</sup> in a competitive multi-party state party system. It was a single party government after 1991 when BJP headed a single party government under Kalyan Singh in Uttar Pradesh. Congress described the victory as the verdict against the misrule and anti-people policies of Mulayam Singh Yadav-led government. It marks a halt in the coalition era. BSP contested without allies.

The electoral strategies of Mayawati enabled the party to taste victory. It had formed a new kind of a social coalition under the name of 'Sarva Samaj' and abandoned its earlier antagonistic strategy of hatred against the upper caste. She expressed her desire to create a social synthesis among the Brahmins, Muslims, OBCs and the Dalits. This enabled BSP to expand its support base. To become all inclusive BSP had organised several 'Brahmin Jodo Sammelans' throughout the state. Since 2005 she in order to reorient her party from *bahujan* party to *sarvajan* party Mayawati started to mobilize the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Kayasthas in order to expand her electoral base. BSP had also formed '*bhaichara* (brotherhood) committees' for fostering brotherhood and amicable relationship between the Brahmins, the economically poor among the upper caste, and the Other Backward Communities (OBCs). Apart from the Dalits, a large number of Brahmins were given party tickets for the assembly polls in 2007. The Brahmins leaders had no opportunity to prosper politically with Congress or BJP with their dwindling bases. Therefore, it drifted towards the BSP for political gains. The BSP continued to make appeal to its traditional base of the dalits for the 2007 polls and also retained its base of the religious minorities such as the ansaris, gaddis, chikwas, lalbegs, etc. Mayawati has always given representation to the candidate from the Muslim community in her party

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<sup>25</sup> "Dismiss Jagmohan: Mayawati", The Hindu, July 29, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> "Ajit Singh pulls out ministers from Mayawati government", The Hindu, May 25, 2003.

<sup>27</sup> "Mulayam sworn in CM", The Hindu, August 30, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> "Mayawati takes Uttar Pradesh", The Hindu, May 12, 2007.

and in the government. In 2007 BSP could garner 17 percent of the Muslim vote due to Mayawati's political wisdom (Kumar, 2007, p.2238). She projected herself as a very accommodative leader before the 2007 assembly polls to instil confidence among all the caste and communities in the state and acquired the status of a *sarvajan* (all-inclusive) party in the state. This made the people repose their faith in the party for whom not animosity but rather comprehensive development was becoming a matter of interest. Her new political strategy provided impetus to the state politics. She vowed to ensure development of the entire society (*sarva samaj*), restore law and order situation in the state and curb criminalisation of politics and deal with heavy hand the strong-arm tactics of the SP cadres. She attributed her victory in the 2007 assembly polls to the concept of "sarva samaj"<sup>29</sup>.

However, the 2007 Mayawati-led government was tainted with charges of corruption, reckless spending of public money on magnifying her own glory by building innumerable statues of herself and of Kanshiram as well as the statues of her party symbol, the elephant. She constructed numerous parks displaying these statues to commemorate the achievements of some eminent Dalits. She could have spent the money to improve roads, build more schools, houses for slum dwellers and improve the sanitation condition of the state. Her administration showed no interest in development and good governance rather she was accused of spending public money on various celebrations including her birthdays. Mayawati's own declared assets are Rs 111.64 crore which made her the richest politician in the country<sup>30</sup>. Samajwadi party's chief ministerial candidate, Mr Akhilesh Yadav who made 10,000 km *yatras* and 800 rallies attacked Mayawati for producing an underperforming government which remained occupied only in constructing memorial park and statues for herself, of Kanshiram, various other Dalit icons and of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in various part of the state. Akhilesh Yadav through his '*Kranti Rath Yatra*'<sup>31</sup> had appealed to the masses to vote for change.

Therefore, in 2012 assembly election SP came back to power with 224 seats, BSP got reduced to 80 seats and INC bagged 28 seats, BJP could win just 47 seats and RLD

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<sup>29</sup> "Focus on Sarva Samaj: Mayawati", The Hindu, May 15, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> "Mayawati declared wealth is Rs. 111.64 crore", The Hindu, March 14, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Samajwadi party has organised election rallies through "kranti rath yatra" which has huge participation of organisational workers who wear red caps and releases red and green ballons to mark the beginning of the rallies and in support of their party and its new chief ministerial candidate Akhilesh Yadav, Mulayam's son. See "And the winner is....Chaos", Outlook, January 23, 2012.

won only 9 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The entry of Akhilesh Yadav as the chief ministerial candidate for the 2012 polls reaped benefits for the party. The people of UP saw new hope of better governance and enhanced services in the new and clean face of Mulayam's son. The SP swept the 2012 polls and the coalition politics has taken a backseat in present times since 2007. The 2012 assembly poll was about new aspirations of a better vision of future, good governance and plausible schemes for development. Tej Narain Pandey of SP claimed that the people of UP have voted for SP in 2012 assembly polls because they have set aside politics of temple and yearned only for development and good governance<sup>32</sup>. BJP's poor choice of chief ministerial candidate inflicted a blow in its chances of better performance in the state. People failed to identify with Uma Bharti, the chief ministerial face of BJP, who was brought in from her home state Madhya Pradesh to fight for BJP in UP. Although the party in its manifesto had promised for one crore new jobs, accelerate process of industrialisation to stop immigration, give laptops and tablets for Rs. 5000 and Rs. 1000 each, 33 percent reservation for women in the vidhan sabha and government jobs, built Ram Mandir in Ayodha as well spiritual Disneyland in Vrindhavan and Mathura, improve health and install Lokayuktas in the state, allowances for youth, etc. but nothing could save it from the defeat in the hands of SP. According to Mayawati, SP won in 2012 because the votes polled got divided between BJP and SP. Muslims voted for SP and Hindus for BJP<sup>33</sup>. In 2012 election battle appealing to the minorities was a significant method of mobilization. Congress promised 9 percent reservation for the Muslims and SP persuaded the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Syed Ahmed Bukhari to appeal to the people to vote for it. 7000 crore central package for backward Bundelkhand was promised by the Congress through the rallies. The congress then at the centre forwarded a central package of Rs. 3000 crore for backward Muslims in its bid to bag the 18 percent Muslim votes that finally drifted towards the SP<sup>34</sup>. The Democratic Peace Party was launched in 2007 by Dr. Ayub, a wealthy doctor from Gorakpur. The party mainly tries to create its base among the backward caste such as the Muslims, the Dalits and the weavers. The party could fetch for itself four seats only. Peace Party could win from the khalilabad, Doomriyaganj, Rae Bareli and

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<sup>32</sup>“UP election results: Ayodhya rejects BJP opts for Mulayam's candidate”, March, 06, 2012, [www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com), (accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2015, 1:35 pm).

<sup>33</sup>“UP election results: Mayawati blames Congress, BJP for defeat: Say 70% Muslims picked Mulayam”, March, 07, 2012, [www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com), (accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2015, 1:50 pm).

<sup>34</sup>“UP polls: Verdict for Rahul”, March, 05, 2012, [www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com), (accessed on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2015, 1:19pm).

Kanth (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Due to the outstanding performance by SP no party could play a spoiler in the assembly polls. Apna Dal which mainly draws its support among the kurmis could bag just a single seat from the Rohaniya constituency in the 2012 assembly election. Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Ajit Singh, son of Chaudhury Charan Singh could bag just nine seats for itself (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). According to Congress, it had failed to retain its improved position in the state because of its dwindling organisational structure, less zealous local and district party workers and the controversial statements by Congressmen Salman Kurshid and Beni Prasad<sup>35</sup>. The party lacked a local leader with whom the people of the state could connect and repose their faith in him. SP won the 2012 assembly election because of the Yadav-Muslim combine and the youths too rallied behind it. The party during its campaign promised for implementation of the Sachar-Rangnath Mishra Commission Report. It promised to open Urdu medium schools and devolve more funds for the madrasas. Muslims would be inducted into state security forces and grant of Rs. 30,000 would be given to the Muslims to girls who pass Class X for further studies and marriage. Adhoc teachers would be regularised in service, parent earning less than Rs. 5 lakh would be given free education, students from economically weaker sections would be given coaching and free hostels to stay, promised free tablets and laptops to school leaving children, implement use of English language in education, assured to protect the self-respect of the Muslims and work for their socio-economic development, better education and include Muslims in the new ministry once voted to power, 18 percent of reservation for the Muslims under separate category, construct boundary walls along Muslim graveyard, compulsory free education till Class VIII and for all girls till graduation, colleges in Muslim dominated areas, free books till Class VIII and free clothes to girls twice a year. Mulayam Singh Yadav attributed credit to the overwhelming support of the Muslims to the SP for the 2012 assembly poll clean sweep<sup>36</sup>.

However, with the 2017 assembly election BJP swept the polls with an overwhelming number of seats. By bagging 312 assembly seats out of the 384 contested seats BJP dethroned Samajwadi Party which could just capture 47 out of the 311 contested

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<sup>35</sup> “Rahul Gandhi analyses why Congress failed in UP”, April, 05, 2012, [www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com), (accessed on 18 Feb., 2015, 12:30pm).

<sup>36</sup> “Swing of Muslim votes did us in: Maya”, The Hindu, March 8, 2012

seats. INC emerged victorious only in 7 seats. BSP improved its performance in the assembly polls by winning from 19 seats. In the 2014 lok sabha election BSP gave a precarious performance by drawing a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Internal bickering within the Samajwadi party, conflict over political opportunities among the top leaders of Samajwadi party, the Saffron surge, the heightened popularity of Narendra Modi as a leader, the development visions of BJP, the populists rhetoric of BJP, the aspirations of the masses for greater and comprehensive development are some of the factors that facilitated the victory of BJP in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

### **The Features of Uttar Pradesh State Party System**

UP politics is largely driven by ‘interest’ based politics where the various social sections of the society such as the upper caste, the peasant class and then ultimately the lower backward caste has contributed in the shaping up of the state politics that has in turn realigned the state party system. The state party system is also marked by factionalism and defection which had contributed towards the multiplicity of political parties. Alliance politics has become a predominant phenomenon since 1967. The party system has remained unstable and volatile in nature. Conflict over political opportunities has led to frequent realignments of the party system. However, since 2007 the state party system has acquired a stable nature as the electorates have delivered absolute mandate in favour of a single political party. Since the year 2000, besides the issue of “identity”, development and good governance has also become a significant factor in UP politics and have become deciding factors in the evolution of the state party system.

### **Uttarakhand**

Uttarakhand (formerly known as Uttaranchal) was formed on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2000 as the 27<sup>th</sup> state of India and was carved out of Uttar Pradesh. Nityanand Swami, the Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh legislative Council, was installed as the first chief minister of the newly formed state by the BJP leadership. He remained in power till 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2001. He then voluntarily resigned when was asked by the BJP

leadership and Shri Bhagat Singh Koshiyari succeeded him<sup>37</sup>. The state party system is consistently a competitive multi-party system which is bipolarized in nature with the contest for power mainly oscillating between the Congress Party and the BJP.

### **Good Governance dominated Mandate**

With the first assembly election in 2002 Congress emerged victorious in the newly formed state by winning 36 of the 70 contested seats, polling 26.91 percent of seats and 26.91 percent of votes. BJP stood distant second with 19 seats, polling 25.81 percent of seats and 25.45 percent of votes (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Under performance by the state administration and complacency of the BJP state unit are the two immediate reasons for its failure to emerge victorious with the first assembly election. BJP assumed that since during its tenure at the centre Uttarakhand was created so people will vote naturally for the party. BSP secured only 7 seats and NCP could win just a single seat (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Constituencies such Lakshar, Dharcula and Jaspur was won by Independents. Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), the state based party of the state, won 4 of the 64 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Congress came to power in the state in alliance with UKD. Narain Dutt Tiwari, a Congress leader was sworn in as the first chief minister of Uttaranchal (now known as Uttarakhand)<sup>38</sup> by Congress High Command. Others vying for the post was Mr. Harish Rawat, Mr. Satpal Maharaj, Indira Hirdesh and Vijay Bahugana. He remained in power from 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2002 till 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2007. In 2007 the state of Uttarakhand conducted its second assembly polls. With 2007 state election BJP emerged as the single largest party in the assembly and formed the government in the state by bagging 34 seats out of 69 contested seats, polling 31.90 percent of seats and 31.90 percent of votes. However, it fell short of one seat in order to achieve clear majority in the assembly. INC secured 21 seats polling 29.59 percent of votes and 29.59 percent of seats. BSP bagged only 8 seats out of the 68 contested seats. Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), the state based party, fetched for it only 3 seats Pauri, Nand prayag, Dharcula was won by Independent candidates (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). 3 members of UKD and 2 Independents lend their support to BJP to enable it to form the

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<sup>37</sup> “Koshiyari may be new Uttaranchal CM”, The Hindu, 29 October, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> “Tiwari sworn in as Uttaranchal CM”, The Hindu, March 03, 2002.

government in the state<sup>39</sup>. Major General (Retd.) B.C Khanduri, the Uttar Pradesh BJP legislature party leader, who spearheaded the BJP's election campaign in Uttarakhand was unanimously elected by the senior leaders of BJP for the post of the chief minister of the state<sup>40</sup>. Factionalism within the Uttarakhand state unit of Congress party, rising prices, corruption, unemployment were some of the factors that made the Congress party unpopular in the state and the people voted in favour of BJP<sup>41</sup>. He remained in office till June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009. He was then replaced by Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" and he remained in office from June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 till September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011. BJP's rout in the hill state in the Lok Sabha election of 2009, apathy of the party cadres towards Khanduri for his indifferent attitude towards them, inability to deliver governance and provide overall development in the state were some of the reasons behind his removal from the post by the Party High Command. However, again on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Ramesh Pokhriyal was replaced by Major General B.C Khanduri. He remained in power till March, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Khanduri was sworn in as the chief minister of Uttarakhand for the second time replacing Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" in an apparent bid by BJP to lift its sagging image following corruption charges and intra-party feuds in the state ahead of 2012 assembly polls in the state. Nishank was ordered to step down by the party high command. The state conducted its third assembly polls in the 2012 following which again INC came to power in the state. Vijay Bahugana was elected as the chief minister of the state. He assumed office on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and continued till January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. INC bagged 32 seats out of the 70 contested seats polling 33.79 percent of votes and 34.03 percent of seats. BJP could win 31 seats out of the 70 contested seats polling 33.13 percent of votes and 33.38 percent of seats. BSP bagged just 3 seats, UKD won a single seat, Tehri, Deoprayag, Lalkuwa was grabbed by Independents (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). He was selected for the top post by the Congress High Command by ending the rat race for the top post by five other aspirants in the hill state<sup>42</sup>. The Baghuna led government attained majority in the floor of the assembly with the support of three Bahujan

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<sup>39</sup> "UKD and Independents lends support to BJP", The Hindu, March 04, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> "Khanduri to be CM", The Hindu, March 02, 2007.

<sup>41</sup> "Price rise a factor behind defeats: Sonia", The Hindu, March 07, 2007. Also See "Congress defeat", The Hindu, March 08, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> The other aspirants for the top post in the hill state were Union Minister of state Harish Rawat, Member of Parliament Yashpal Maharaj, State Congress President Yashpal Arya, Leader of Opposition Harak Singh Rawat and Senior minister Indira Hrideyesh.

Samajwadi Party leaders, three Independents and the lone UKD MLA<sup>43</sup>. However, ahead of the 2014 general election in order to maintain the credibility of the party among the masses, Vijay Bahugana was replaced by Harish Rawat, the Union minister of the water resources<sup>44</sup>. The former had to step down for his inefficient role in the management of the relief and rehabilitation work by the Bhaguna-led government in the state following the 2013 devastating flash flood in the state. Hence the state remained under the rule of Harish Rawat-led Congress ruled government. However, attempts were made by the BJP state leaders to topple the Rawat-led ministry in the state when 9 Congress rebel deserted Congress and the Rawat ministry fell short of the required number of assembly seats. The state was under President's rule for a short period. However, Rawat ministry was able to withstand the floor test and came back to head the state government. With the 2017 assembly election the state adhere to its tradition of oscialating between BJP and Congress party and hence voted BJP back to power. BJP emerged victorious with 56 seats out of the 70 contested seats. Congress could bag 11 of the 70 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

### **The Features of the Uttarakhand State Party System**

The state has set aside issues like language and region and has repeatedly given verdict in the lines of development initiatives undertaken and based on the performance of the government. This has always reflected in the evolution of the state party system. The state party system is also marked by intense factionalism and conflict over political opportunities that have time and again shaped the course of the state party system. The party system of the state is largely bipolarized in nature with Congress and BJP as prime contenders for power. Other parties do exist but have not played much significant role in the formation of the government except in the 2007 when UKD supported BJP to form the government on the state as it had failed to secure absolute majority in the state assembly polls.

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<sup>43</sup> "Uttarakhand stand offends", The Hindu, March 15, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> "Rawat sworn in as Uttarakhand CM", The Hindu, February 02, 2014.

## **Chhattisgarh**

The state of Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh. The new state which came into being on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2000 comprised of the tribal dominated southern districts of Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh was then under the rule of Congress party led by Digvijay Singh. Ajit Jogi was unanimously elected as the leader of the Chhattisgarh Congress Legislature Party (CLP) and was later on sworn in as the first chief minister of the state of Chhattisgarh. V.C Shukla was also a strong contender for the post but was not favored for the post by the majority of the members of the CLP. Shukla was only backed by seven of the forty eight CLP members. The former Madhya Pradesh Assembly Speaker, Rajendra Prasad Shukla, and the former State Minister, Mahendra Bahadur Singh proposed to elect Ajit Jogi as the leader of CLP. There was a broad consensus in favour of Ajit Jogi who was finally appointed as the first chief minister of the newly formed state. He remained in power till December 6, 2003<sup>45</sup>. Since its formation the state was engulfed with numerous problems. It was affected by the problem of naxalism, acute poverty, acute food grain shortages and drinking water problem due to scanty rainfall. The Jogi administration also had to deal with the issue of large scale migration due to the condition of drought in the state. Unemployment was also a serious issue to ponder upon<sup>46</sup>.

### **A strong bastion of BJP**

The state conducted its first ever assembly poll in the month of November and December, 2003. Following the 2003 assembly election in the state of Chhattisgarh, BJP came to power by bagging 50 out of the 90 contested seats, polling 39.26 percent of seats and 39.26 percent of votes. INC could win just 37 of the 90 contested seats polling 36.71 percent of seats and 36.71 percent of votes. BSP could etch for itself only 2 seats, NCP could win a single seat, CPI and CPI (M) drew a blank in the state. State based parties like JMM, Shiv Sena and JD (U) drew a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Raman Singh was sworn in as the second chief minister of the

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<sup>45</sup> Lalit Shastri, "Jogi elected as Chhattisgarh CLP leader unanimously", The Hindu, November 01, 2000.

<sup>46</sup> "Tackling of drought to get priority: Ajit jogi", The Hindu, November 03, 2000.

state of Chhattisgarh. The people of Chhattisgarh deserted Congress (I) and voted in favour of BJP, especially the tribals<sup>47</sup>.

With the 2008 assembly election BJP again emerged as victorious bagging 50 out of the 90 contested seats with 40.39 percent of seats and 40.33 percent of votes. INC could win just 38 of the 87 contested seats, polling 39.88 percent of seats and 38.63 percent of votes. CPI, CPI (M), NCP, RJD drew a blank in the 2008 state assembly polls. BSP could win from just 2 seats. State based parties like JMM, Shiv Sena, SP drew a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Raman Singh was sworn in for the second consecutive term as the chief minister of Chhattisgarh. The subsidized rice scheme, effective implementation of NREGA scheme, tribal vote, clean image of Raman Singh, welfare services such as providing education, health facilities and shelter to poor tribal children by the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA) an affiliate of the Sangh Parivar<sup>48</sup>, the organized leadership by the Raman Singh and its antipathy towards naxalism enabled BJP to retain BJP's ruling position in the state. Congress, on the contrary, stood disunited, the dynastic politics adopted by the influential leaders of the Congress state unit, Ajit Jogi's inability to emerge as the mass leader for the people of the state, more particularly, the tribals failed to repose their faith in him and hence Congress failed to occupy the state's mantle<sup>49</sup>.

In the 2013 assembly election to the state of Chhattisgarh, BJP emerged triumphant for the third consecutive time in the state. Raman Singh retained the position of the chief minister in the state<sup>50</sup>. BJP fetched for itself 49 of the 90 contested seats polling 41.18 percent of seats and 41.04 percent of votes. INC captured 10 seats less than BJP and won 39 out of the 90 contested seats with 40.43 percent of seats and 40.29 percent of votes. State based parties like National People's Party (NCP), Shiv Sena, JD (U), LJP and SP was drubbed in the election. NCP, CPI, CPI (M) drew a blank. BSP could win just 1 seat (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The pro-welfare schemes such as distribution of rice at Re. 1 and Rs. 2 per kg to the families belonging to extremely poor and below poverty line categories helped popularized Raman Singh's administration in the state. Thus, the state party system largely became a competitive multi-party

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<sup>47</sup> Purnima S.Tripathi, "A loss of Traditional Vote", *Frontline*, Vol. 20, Issue. 26, Dec. 20- Jan. 02, 2004.

<sup>48</sup> For Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, *See* Saumya, "Communalism: Narratives in Chhattisgarh", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Jan. 12 - 18, 2008, pp. 38-44.

<sup>49</sup> See Aarti Dhar, "Tribal votes helped BJP win Chhattisgarh", *The Hindu*, December 10, 2008.

<sup>50</sup> "Raman Singh sworn in as Chhattisgarh CM", [www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com) (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2015).

bipolarized system, the contest oscillating mainly between Congress (I) and BJP and the latter having an edge over all the political parties. BJP for its large spending on social indicators tends to remain the popular choice in the state. Performance and populism has been the significant criterion based on which the electorate's of the state have voted since its inception.

## **Assam**

Assam is one of the important states in the north-east of India and is marked by extreme ethnic diversity. Assam is a homeland of various racial, religious, linguistic and cultural groups. Bodos, Karbis, Dimasas, Mech, Ahoms, Tiwas, Mishings, Rabhas, Bengalis, tea plantation tribes all co-exist in the region of Assam. *Ahomiyas* or Assamese are the dominant community in the state. North-east remains plagued with issues like underdevelopment, movement for secessions, ethnic conflicts. Since independence there was a demand for the bifurcation of the state of Assam by some tribal leaders. But the Bordoloi ministry which remained in power from 1946 till 1950 resisted the idea firmly and the ministry could effectively suppress the demand with assurance that the tribal would have access to all the facilities and benefits of Independent India. The tribal have their own distant culture, traditions, taboos, social system which is quite distinct from the people of Assam.

Since independence it has been one of the citadels of the Congress party. Initially the upper caste Assamese had dominated the state power structure. The state is presently under the rule of the Congress party for the last fifteen years. The state has remained under the rule of non-Congress government as well. After independence the state conducted its first state election in 1951 and INC bagged 76 out of the 92 contested seats polling 43.48 percent of votes and 46.80 percent of seats. CPI could win a single seat (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress formed the government in the state and Bishnuram Medhi was appointed as the chief minister of the state ([www.assamassembly.gov.in](http://www.assamassembly.gov.in)). In 1957 state election INC surpassed all the other contesting parties and won 71 out of the 101 contested seats with 52.35 percent of votes and 53.52 percent of seats. CPI won four seats and PSP could win 8 out of the 36 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). INC came to power in the state consecutively for the second term under the leadership of B.P Chaliha who was

comparatively more popular and liberal towards the hill people. Meanwhile, Medhi was appointed the Governor of Madras during whose tenure Assam state government decided to impose Assamese language as the official language of the state that led to brewing up of discontentment among the hill educated tribals whose prospective in the education and employment sector was getting badly effected as the implementation would make mandatory for the tribal to learn Assamese language (Mukherjee, 1969, p.301). This was considered as an assault by the tribal communities towards their culture and identity and was seen as an attempt to assimilate them into the main Assamese community. These led to severe revolts and the tribal's demanded for a separate state to preserve their primordial loyalties and protect their own distinctive culture and identity. The hill people organized themselves into a new group named All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC). In 1962 INC again emerged victorious by capturing 79 out of the 103 contested seats polling 48.25 percent of votes and 48.95 percent of seats. PSP could bag just six seats. All Party Hill leaders Congress (HLC) could win 11 out of the 15 contested seats. In 1967 state election INC bagged 73 out of the 120 contested seats polling 43.60 percent of votes and 44.66 percent of seats. CPI could win 7 seats, PSP won 5 seats. HLC could win 9 out of the 12 contested seats. With the 1972 assembly polls INC could capture 95 out of the 114 contested seats polling 53.20 percent of votes and 53.20 percent of seats and form the government in the state (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Chaliha continued as the chief minister till 1970. Chaliha had to step down due to his ill health and was succeeded by Mahendra Mohan Choudhury in November 11, 1970 and was appointed as the chief minister of the state unanimously by the Assam Congress Legislature Party ([www.assamassembly.gov.in](http://www.assamassembly.gov.in)). However, the appointment of Mohendra Mohan Choudhury was resented by a group of leaders headed by Sarat Chandra Sinha within the state Congress unit. Finally, Choudhury had to step down and with the support of Indira Gandhi, Sarat Chandra Sinha was appointed as the chief minister of the state (Hazarika, 1994, p.212). Sinha was installed as a gesture to widen the base of the Congress party in the state. Due to the rise of regionalism the state witnessed a series of popular movements related to rise in price of the essential commodities and violent agitations over the issue of medium of instruction in state schools. These movements were followed by strikes and communal riots in different parts of the state during the entire period of 1972 till 1974 (Sarmah, 1989, pp. 273-274). Hence to retain its hold over the state party system the Congress party provided

representation to the underrepresented sections of the society such as the Muslims, tea plantation workers, linguistic minorities, scheduled castes and tribes and installed Sarat Chandra Sinha who belonged to the Other Backward Caste (OBC) community as the chief minister of the state. Hence, the long domination of the upper caste in the state Congress unit came to an end (Hussain, 1990, p.32). However, the Sinha ministry failed to sustain popularity of the Congress party in the state and entangled itself in the heinous crime of committing excesses during the emergency in the state as well. These led to the historic verdict by the state when it voted for a non-Congress alternative for the first time since independence. Hence from 1951 assembly election till the 1972 assembly election the state party system was characterized by the predominance of the Congress Party as the majority party in the competitive multi-party system.

In 1978 state election INC could win 26 out of the 126 contested seats with 23.62 percent of votes and 23.62 percent of seats. JNP could win 53 out of the 117 contested seats with 27.55 percent of votes and 29.95 percent of seats. Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTC) could win 4 out of the 9 contested seats. CPI (M) secured 1 out of the 27 contested seats and CPI could win 5 out of the 35 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). In 1978, the state came under the rule of a coalition government led by the Janata Party and supported by the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA)<sup>51</sup> and some Independents with Golap Chandra Borbora as the chief minister of the state ([www.assamassembly.gov.in](http://www.assamassembly.gov.in)). The Left parties supported it from outside. Hence, the pre-dominant position of the Congress party in the state party system came to an end. The state party system got transformed into a competitive multi-party bipolarized system with coalition governments. However, the Janata experiment proved to an abysmal failure in the country as well as in the state. Following the Janata split, Borbora was replaced by Jogendra Nath Hazarika ([www.assamassembly.gov.in](http://www.assamassembly.gov.in)). However, following a large-scale defection the Janata ministry collapsed and Shrimati Anowara Taimur came to power to head the Congress (I) ministry in the state. However she failed to acquire the majority in the assembly and the state came under the President's rule in the state. In January 1982 Kesab Chandra Gogoi was installed as the chief minister of the state but he also could not

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<sup>51</sup> PTCA was formed to protect the interests of the plain tribal of Assam who were largely threatened by the illegal influx of immigrants from Bangladesh into the tribal areas of Assam since independence. It was formed in 1967 and demanded for a separate state called Udaychal for the plain tribal of Assam.

continue in power for his ministry failed to seek a vote of confidence. The state came under the President's rule for the third time. Following the intervention of the centre, initiatives were undertaken to conduct a fresh assembly poll in the state. Meanwhile, Assam was in a state of turmoil following the anti-foreigner's movement in the state since 1978<sup>52</sup>. The agitators made every effort to disrupt the normal life in the state and boycott election. The state witnessed large-scale political violence, massacres, kidnaps, assassinations, riots, burning of state properties (Hussain, 1999, pp. 34-35). With the 1983 assembly polls INC won 91 out of the 109 contested seats polling 52.53 percent of votes and 52.53 percent of seats and formed the government in the state under the leadership of Hiteswar Saikia (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). During the early 1980s the Congress party experienced partial restoration of its dominance in the centre as well as in many states. Assam was one such state where Congress restored itself back to the position of the ruling party in the competitive multi-party bipolarized state party system. Moreover, the Janata Party-led coalition government failed to emerge as an alternative in the centre as well in the state. Factionalism, infighting, ideological incongruity, disagreements over policy issue, conflicts over political opportunities weakened the Janata experiment. However, the Saikia ministry was dissolved and the state went for mid-term polls<sup>53</sup>. In 1985 assembly polls INC could bag 25 out of the 125 contested seats with 23.23 percent of votes and 23.41 percent of seats. AGP bagged 64 out of the 125 contested seats. Indian Congress (Socialist) could win 4 out of the 72 contested seats. 92 seats out of the 704 contested seats were occupied by the Independents (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The newly formed Assam Gono Parishad (AGP) came to power in the state with Prafulla Kumar Mahanto as its chief minister in the state ([www.assamassembly.gov.in](http://www.assamassembly.gov.in)). Hence, with the 1985

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<sup>52</sup> The anti-foreigners movement gained momentum when efforts were made by the Borbora government to cancel citizenship of thousands of voters of the Mangaldoi constituency which was scheduled to hold a by-election to the Lok Sabha in April 1979 following the death of MP Hiralal Patowari. These voters were labelled as outsiders or foreign nationals. The issue of influx of foreign nationals were increasingly becoming a serious issue in the state which shared its borders with Bangladesh. Large influxes of immigrants or *bohiragotos* were perceived as encroachment upon the scarce natural resources, employment and political opportunities. Their (mostly Bengali Muslims from Bangladesh) influx was a threat to the indigenous Assamese natives. Since 1979 AASU, a student's group was instrumental in spearheading the anti-foreigner's movement. AASU was popular among the people of Assam for been instrumental in spearheading other movements such as the language movement, etc.

<sup>53</sup> The assembly was dissolved following a violent protest from AASU in protest of the signing of the Assam Accord between the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress (I) government and the leadership of the movement. Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) vehemently opposed and criticised the Accord. AJD and PLP too highlighted this grave issue of illegal immigration by foreign nationals.

assembly polls till 2016 assembly polls the state party system reacquired and have retained a competitive multi-party bipolarized character with coalition governments.

AGP was formed at the third political convention in October 1985 comprising of all the existing regional parties such as the Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) and Assam Jatiatabadi Dal (AJD) and other constituents of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP). AAGSP was formed on 1979 to run the Assam movement to drive out the immigrants. The movement had demanded detection, disfranchisement and deportation of the foreigners (Hazarika, 1988, pp.277-278). For the second time the state party system witnessed realignment with the birth of a political novice, the Assam Gono Parishad (AGP) in the state that was successful in dislodging the Congress party from power in the state. The multi-party system remained fragmented and evolved as bipolar in nature.

However, with the 1991 state election INC came back to power with Hiteswar Saikia as the chief minister of the state. BJP could win just 10 seats. CPI and CPM could bag 4 and 2 seats respectively. INC could win 66 out of the 125 contested seats polling 29.35 percent of votes and 29.35 percent of seats. JD (S) and JP drew a blank and JD could win from one seats. AGP could bag 19 out of the 121 contested seats with 17.93 percent of votes and 18.60 percent of seats. Natun Assam Gono Parishad (NAGP) could win 5 out of the 85 contested seats polling 5.45 percent of votes and 8.06 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). AGP government's poor performance and incoherence between rhetoric and intent compelled the people of Assam to resort back to the Congress party. AGP failed to emerge as an alternative to the Congress party in the state of Assam. The AGP vowed to implement the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act, 1983 if voted to power but during its tenure could not detect and deport all the immigrants due to procedural lacunae. Moreover, the AGP government could not solve other issues of concern like underdevelopment, industrialization, unemployment, problem of militancy, etc. On the contrary, the AGP ministers got engulfed into corruption and failed to perform and deliver governance to the people of Assam. It failed to pacify the militant activities that were conducted by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)<sup>54</sup> militants and the Bodo movement by the United Bodo Nationalist Liberation Front which demanded a separate Bodoland,

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<sup>54</sup> ULFA is a secessionist organisation which came into being with the aspiration to liberate Assam from India.

inclusion of Bodo language in the eighth Schedule and formation of Autonomous Council for the people of Bodo group. The AGP government proved to be highly inefficient. AGP deceived the people of Assam and failed to successfully implement the Assam Accord and was unsuccessful in resolving any of the burning issues of that period as well as also failed to produce an atmosphere of harmony in the state that was toiling hard with problems like ethnic conflicts, poverty, unemployment, violation of human rights, poor standard of living, etc (Hussain, 2001, pp. 442-444). The party itself suffered a split due to internal dissensions and Natun Assam Gana Parishad (NAGP) was formed under the leadership of Bhriгу Phukan. Hence it could not emerge victorious in the 1991 assembly polls and therefore INC came back to head the government in the state. NAGP acted as a spoiler for AGP and the votes of AGP got fragmented and the birth of NAGP contributed positively towards the electoral fate of Congress in the 1996 state election.

However, again with the 1996 assembly election the people of Assam voted back AGP to power in the state due to the corrupt and inefficient administration of the Saikia ministry. The Saikia ministry failed to contend militancy in the state. The surrendered ULFA (known as SULFA) militants became a menace for the civil society. They unleashed terror and violence in the state. The ministry also failed to retract Assam in the path of development. Hence, for the third time since independence INC was thrown out of power in the state of Assam. In 1996 state election BJP could secure 4 out of the 117 contested seats, CPI and CPM could bag 3 and 2 seats respectively. INC could secure 34 out of the 122 contested seats. AGP and NAGP merged on the eve of the 1996 assembly election. AGP could win 59 out of the 69 contested seats. Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) of Karbi Anglong which demanded for an autonomous state within Assam in accordance to the Art. 224 (A) could win all the 5 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). AGP came to form the government in the alliance with CPI (M) and CPI (Srikanth, 1999, pp. 3412-3413). AGP combine still could not deliver good governance to the people of Assam and got riddled with charges of corruption, inefficiency and maladministration. Unemployment figures kept soaring. The Mahanta-led AGP combine failed to tackle the law and order situation in the country. Intensity of militant activities brought normal life of the people of the state to a standstill. Mahanta-led government had to confront with violent ethnic conflicts by the Bodos. Therefore, the government had to

resort to army operation to pacify the militant activities which further led to violation of human rights. Thousands women, children and civilians had to lose their life in the fighting between the militants and the government led army operations. Mahanta-led government failed to uproot the SULFA militants and on the contrary the atrocities committed by the SULFA increased manifold (Sharma, 1996, pp 285-286). State's economic condition was under distress because of the repeated halts in the developmental activities of the state administration due to insurgency problem. The state failed to attract any investments and hence industrialization suffered a severe jolt. The AGP-led government failed to undertake any substantial initiatives to ensure development in the state<sup>55</sup>. Just prior to the 2001 assembly election AGP snapped its alliance with the Left parties and entered into a pre-poll alliance with BJP. This gesture of the AGP was resented by its own party members and several of them rebelled and crossed over to Congress (I). BJP workers as well resented it and some left the party and joined the newly formed Asom Bharatiya Janata Party (ABJP) of Hiranya Bhattacharya. The split in AGP scattered its vote and facilitated Congress (I) to improve its chances of winning. Hence, with the 2001 assembly polls, INC could bag 71 out of the 126 contested seats polling 39.75 percent of votes and 39.75 percent of seats and form the government in the state with Shri Tarun Gogoi as the chief minister of the state<sup>56</sup>. BJP could occupy only 8 seats. AGP secured 20 out of the 77 contested seats polling 20.02 percent of votes and 32.35 percent of seats. 19 seats were occupied by the Independents (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). In 2006 assembly election BJP won 10 out of the 125 contested seats polling 11.98 percent of votes and 12.07 percent of seats. INC could capture 53 out of the 120 contested seats with 31.08 percent of votes and 32.70 percent of seats<sup>57</sup> and come back to power in the state with Tarun Gogoi as its chief minister for the second time along with the support of the one Nationalist Congress Party legislator, six Independents and 12 Bodoland People's Progressive Front (Hagrama) legislators<sup>58</sup>. BPPF (Hagrama) enabled Congress to achieve the required number of seats and realigned the state party system by dislodging AGP combine from power. AGP could bag 24 out of the 100 contested seats with 20.39 percent of votes and 25.59 percent of seats. AGP (P) fetched a single seat (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). AGP failed to emerge as an alternative in the state and

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<sup>55</sup> "State's economic condition dismal: Gogoi", The Hindu, May 20, 2001.

<sup>56</sup> "17 Member Gogoi ministry sworn in", The Hindu, May 19, 2001.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.eci.nic.in>

<sup>58</sup> "Gogoi sworn in Chief Minister", The Hindu, May 15, 2006.

suffered another split with the formation of Assam Gono Parishad (Progressive) of Prafulla Kumar Mohanto. Divided opposition and absence of any potential alternative in the state favoured Congress extensively. Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) could win 10 out of the 69 contested seats with 9.03 percent of votes and 16.21 percent of seats. 22 seats were occupied by the Independents (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). AUDF was formed after the IM (DT) Act was scrapped down in 2005 by the Supreme Court of India after a petition was filed by AGP Member Of Parliament, Sarbananda Sonowal. Henceforth detection was based in accordance to the Foreigner's Act, 1946. Hence to represent and protect the interests of the religious minorities AUDF was formed by Badruddin Ajmal before the 2006 assembly election. In 2001, AUDF eroded the Congress base among the religious minorities, especially the Muslim immigrants living in the Char areas. AUDF won from Salmar South, Dhubri, Raha (SC), Dhing, and Hojai in 2006 assembly election. In 2001, INC won from these seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). AUDF could win from Badarpur, Hailakandi, Katigora, and Bilaspur West and from Jamunamukh as well (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

In 2011 assembly election INC emerged as the majority party with 78 seats polling 39.39 percent of votes and 39.42 percent of seats. BJP could win 5 seats. CPI and CPM drew a blank. AGP suffering from organizational weakness and factionalism could win 10 out of the 104 contested seats with 16.29 percent of votes and 19.72 percent of seats. AUDF could secure 18 out of the 78 contested seats polling 12.57 percent of votes and 19.87 percent of seats and emerged as the second largest party. Bodoland People's Front (BOPF) won 12 out of the 29 contested seats with 6.13 percent of votes and 25.16 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress-led coalition government came to power consecutively for the third time. Gogoi retained BPPF as its ally in 2011 despite having the required majority in the assembly. Tarun Gogoi was elected unanimously as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party and was appointed again as the chief minister of the state<sup>59</sup>. Gogoi attributed his victory to his effort to restore and sustain peace in the state which was into intense doldrums since 1996 when AGP combine was in power. Emphasis on peace talks paid rich dividend for the Congress party. Assam was torn apart with violence and terror. The initiation of peace talks with ULFA and negotiation with Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) members by the state government and its subsequent surrender and joining

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<sup>59</sup> "Hat-trick for Gogoi", The Hindu, May 14, 2011.

with the state government as an ally proved electorally beneficial for the party (Baruah, 2009, pp.965-967). He asserted the people voted back the Congress-led coalition government to power for undertaking massive development related initiatives and welfare measures for the poor. Gogoi ministry was successful in implementing mid-day meal scheme and NREGA, the flagship programme of UPA-I, to a great extent in the state. It distributed free yarns to weavers, rice at Rs.6 per kilogram, free computers and laptops to high school students, distributed bicycles to Class IX and X girl students, regularized teachers appointed under the Operation Blackboard. Gogoi government fared well in terms of infrastructural development and in the education sector as well. It fared well in terms of law and order situation in the state by pacifying militancy and insurgency issue to a great extent (Goswami, 2011, pp. 21-22). Gogoi reaffirmed after assuming power that development initiatives will be pursued more vigorously and he also vowed to improve the standard of living of the rural masses, lower rates of unemployment, incidence of poverty and rates of illiteracy as well as encourage village and small-scale industries, boost agriculture and industrialization in the state<sup>60</sup>. People of the state have failed to perceive any other “alternative” for itself and has also kept aside issues like ethnicity, language and religion and have voted in favour of peace and continuous development. Infiltration issue has lost its enigma among the present voters in the state. Moreover, Tarun Gogoi scores above other chief ministerial candidate such as Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, Brindaban Goswami, Ajmal Badruddin and others.

In a turn of event 45 member of the outgoing Legislative Assembly led by Himanta Biswas Sarma, one of the important leaders of Congress Party in Assam had deserted it and has joined BJP on 25 August, 2015<sup>61</sup>. Sarma was removed from the Gogoi ministry by the Chief Minister after Sarma headed a campaign demanding for a change in leadership structure in the state unit of Congress party. Sarma protested against the attempt made by Tarun Gogoi to promote his son’s political career. Sarma was also accused of receiving Rs. 20 lakh per month to oversee the smooth running of the business of Saradha boss, Sudipto Sen in the state<sup>62</sup>. Moreover, BPPF deserted Congress and allied with BJP and secured 12 seats with the 2016 assembly election.

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<sup>60</sup> “Gogoi sworn in”, The Hindu, May 19, 2011.

<sup>61</sup> “Former Assam minister joins BJP”, The Hindu, August 25, 2016.

<sup>62</sup> “Saradha Scam: CBI questions former Assam health minister Himanta Biswas Sarma”, The Economic Times, November 26, 2014.

BJP combine came to power in the state with the 2016 assembly polls (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The State unit of Congress stands disintegrated and the desertion of Sarma had a substantial impact upon the share of vote of the Congress party in the 2016 state election. BJP's alliance with BPPF and AGP and induction of Himanta Kumar Sarma into the BJP state unit has done the wonder for the party. Moreover, projection of a Sarbananda Sonowal, a tribal as the chief ministerial candidate was an added advantage for the party. Sonowal belongs to the Kachari tribe. Assam had a local face as the chief ministerial candidate to vote for unlike Bihar and this proved to be another prime reason for the success of BJP in the election. AUDF could not improve its performance much and could secure 13 seats. Congress could yield 26 seats only on the contrary it had secured absolute majority with the last assembly polls (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). A subtle urge for 'change' in government among the electorates has also facilitated a regime change in the state. The internal infighting within the Congress state unit is the most significant reason why the people resorted to BJP as an alternative. The development oriented rhetoric of BJP has been able to cast its spell among the electorates of Assam as well. BJP could bag 60 seats and AGP won 14 seats<sup>63</sup>. In 2011 assembly election BJP could bag just 5 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

### **The Features of the Assam State Party System**

The state party system of Assam was largely shaped by parametres like social, economic and cultural factors. Ethnicity is the driving force in the state politics that has contributed towards the evolution of the state party system of Assam. Parties constituting the party system are formed that claim to represent these issues. Hence multiplicity of parties is a common feature of the party system. The state party system is marked by factionalism. Factionalism further led to splits and merger and hence multiplicity of parties acquires an accentuated form. Numerous political novices have become the order of the day. They claim to represent the interest of the underrepresented section and issues of the society. Presently urge for development, prosperity and peace are the factors determining the voting pattern in the state politics that in turn is shaping the state party system.

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<sup>63</sup> "A vote for Development: Modi", The Hindu, May 20, 2016.

## **Tamil Nadu**

Madras was one of the first of British settlements in India. The state is the successor to old Madras Presidency. The composite Madras state was later reorganised and the present Tamil Nadu was formed<sup>64</sup>. With independence Madras Presidency became Madras Province and was later incorporated within Indian Union in 1950 and was finally reorganised in 1959 along the linguistic lines. Madras Presidency was the administrative subdivision of British India which included Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, parts of Odisha, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana and Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Madras was renamed as Tamil Nadu in 1969 by the DMK government which was in power since 1967. Madras was again renamed as Chennai. It remained one of the epicentres of nationalism during the freedom movement<sup>65</sup>.

Till 1967 Congress remained the Majority Party in the competitive multi-party state party system and continued to remain in office until the DMK defeated the Congress Party in the 1967 assembly election. Since then Congress has not been able to assume power in the state. The Congress had remained in possession of the state mantle since 1936 onwards ([www.assembly.tn.gov.in](http://www.assembly.tn.gov.in)). It confronted with a weak fragmented opposition and the state had no potential alternative as such. The state Congress was steered by the able leadership of K. Kamraj. However, Kamraj later on relinquished the post and engaged himself in the works of the Congress state unit to strengthen its base in the state.

In 1951 INC secured 152 out of the 367 contested seats polling 34.88 percent of seats and 35.06 percent of votes and came to form the government in the state of Madras. (add it formed minority overnmnet with cpi from material) In 1957 Madras state election INC occupied 151 out of the 204 contested seats with 4534 percent of votes

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<sup>64</sup> Madras was a multi-lingual state with Telegus, Tamils, Kannadigas and Malayalees all living within the same territorial boundaries. Telegus were the first to raise the demand for reorganization of the state. They spearheaded the demand for a separate state for the emancipation of the Telegus. Andhras or the Telegus resisted the highhandedness of the Dravidians. The demand for the separate state predates back to as early as 1912. Series of vehement opposition was raised against the demand of the Telegus. Tamils claimed that they share greater affinity with the state of Madras than the Telegus. Finally, following series of protests and attempts to evolve solution to the separatist impasse in the state in 1953 according to the recommendation of the Wanchoo Committee the new Andhra province was formed with Kurnool as its capital.

<sup>65</sup> See <http://www.tn.gov.in/tamilnadustate> (accessed on August 17, 2016 at 10:15 pm).

and 45.54 percent of seats. 93 seats were bagged by Independent candidates with 44.62 percent of votes and 44.62 percent of seats. With the 1962 assembly polls INC could secure 139 seats out of the 206 contested seats polling 46.14 percent of votes and 46.14 percent of seats. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) could bag 50 seats out of the 143 contested seats with 27.10 percent of votes and 39.05 percent of seats. Justice party could win a single seat (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

## **Rise of DMK**

However, with the 1967 state election INC could win 51 seats out of the 232 contested seats polling 41.10 percent of votes and 41.46 percent of seats. Swatantra Party (SWA) could win 20 seats out of the 27 contested seats with 5.30 percent of votes and 50.12 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) would win from all the four contested seats. BJS drew a blank. CPM and CPI could bag 11 and 2 seats respectively. DMK, the state party could win 137 out of the 174 contested seats polling 40.69 percent of votes and 54.32 percent of seats and form the government in the state (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The rise of DMK to power transformed the state party system into a bipolarized competitive multi-party system. Food crisis, inefficient administration by Congress-led Thiru M. Bakthavatsalam ministry along with the anti-Hindi agitation sealed the electoral fate of the Congress party in the state. To retain its hold over the state politics Congress reorganised the state on the basis of linguistic lines and installed Kamraj, a non-Brahmin as chief minister as well. C. Rajagopalachari, a Brahmin, was replaced by Kamraj. There was rising resentment over the highhandedness and exploitation by the upper caste and landowners (Manivannan, 1992, p.167). These classes constituted the political base of the Congress Party and monopolised the power structure of the state as well. The non-Brahmin demanded greater share of political power. By 1916 the non-Brahmin political identity had assumed distinctiveness. The non-Brahmin political leaders resented the Brahmin domination over the Congress Party. They strongly supported the Adi Dravida<sup>66</sup> demand for social equality. However, these assorted effort failed to yield much success in the upliftment of the status of the depressed class in the social and political structure. Justice Party failed to reconcile the interests of the two groups

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<sup>66</sup> In Tamil Nadu, the Adi Dravida politics largely grew from the protest movement of the Paraiyar community.

due to the caste based attitude of some of the non-Brahmin leaders towards the depressed classes. The non-Brahmin political elite were reluctant about assigning important political positions and enhanced representation to the depressed classes. This discontentment of the depressed classes towards the policies of the Justice party led to a split in the Justice Party (Basu, 2011, pp. 10-28). There was resentment over the growing tendencies of centralization.

Dravida Kazhagam (DK) and later on Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) projected issues like language, culture, identity to create its appeal. Dravidian movement, one of the early regional movements in Indian politics, has its base among the non-Brahmin backward castes, the poor and the lower castes. Periyar<sup>67</sup> translated Justice Party into a movement. In 1944, DK was formed to spearhead the self-respect movement. It emphasized on regional pride. It stood for non-Brahmanism, against caste-based exploitation and social reforms. It restricted itself to a social movement and never contested elections. In 1949, C.N Annadurai broke away from DK and formed DMK by protesting against DK's policy of abstaining from election. The DMK mobilized on the basis of Tamil nationalism. DMK was formed to fulfil the Dravidian aspirations. It protested to protect and promote Tamil language and the Tamil cultural identity. It demanded for Dravidanadu<sup>68</sup> and autonomy of the state from extreme centralization. It resisted the imposition of Hindi as official language. It was anti-North, anti-Brahmin and anti-Hindi in terms of ideology. Thus, DMK gained immense popularity among the Tamil population, mostly among the lower backward class and castes. Riding on populism and sub-nationalism, DMK along with small parties and Independents came to form the first non-Congress government in the state since independence (Forrester, 1976, pp. 285-286). The anti-Congress wave that swept the country during the 1960s washed away Madras as well. The base of the Congress Party was gradually weakening in the state following the growing dissensions between Rajaji and Kamraj. This became evident from the defeat of the Congress party in the corporation elections of 1958 and the second defeat of the Congress party in the Thiruvannamalai by-election of 1963 (Manivannan, 1992, p.

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<sup>67</sup> E.V Ramaswami Naicker popularly known as Periyar emphasised on Dravidian identity and started the self-respect movement in 1925 and initiated the era of anti-North, anti-Aryan, anti-Hindi and anti-Brahmin movement in Madras (now Tamil Nadu).

<sup>68</sup> The anti-Aryan sentiment among the *Adi Dravidians* led to the birth of the demand for Dravidanadu. For more on 'Adi Dravida' Politics See Raj Sekhar Basu, "*The making of Adi Dravida Politics in Early Twentieth Century Tamil Nadu*", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 39, No. 7/8, July-August 2011, pp.9-41.

164). In 1969, Madras was renamed as Tamil Nadu. After the waning away of the aura of Periyar and with sudden death of Annadurai in 1969, Karunanidhi, a trusted aide of Annadurai succeeded him and steered the party and became the chief minister as well since February 1969. DMK under the leadership of Karunanidhi remained in the helm of power till 1976 ([www.assembly.tn.gov.in](http://www.assembly.tn.gov.in)). Hence, with the 1971 election DMK emerged victorious with 184 seats out of the 203 contested seats, polling 48.58 percent of votes and 55.34 percent of seats. Indian National Congress (Organisation) could bag 15 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). However, the state government was dissolved in 1976 during the emergency era. The state was under the president's rule till 1977 assembly election. The state experienced all the excesses during emergency era which includes press censorship, suppression of rights to protest, indiscriminate arrest, wrongful dismissal of elected state government, forceful sterilisation, high prices of agricultural products and fertilisers (Sathyamurthy, 1989, p.884). Hence, the popularity of DMK experienced a downslide. The dynastic rule by Karunanidhi was another cause that attributed to its downfall in the state. In 1972, DMK suffered a split. M. Gopala Ramachandran (popularly addressed as MGR) deserted DMK and formed his own party. MGR was expelled from DMK after he revolted against the system of dictatorial rule in the party. He formed All India Annadurai Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in 1972 following the feud with Karunanidhi over the issue of leadership of the DMK party in the state. Hence the strength of DMK declined followed by the split due to bifurcation of the support base between DMK and the newly formed AIADMK (Jr. Hardgrave, 1973, p. 288).

### **Rise of AIADMK**

AIADMK won the 1977, 1980, 1984 assembly polls under the leadership of MGR. With the birth of AIADMK the state party system mainly remained bipolarized and competitive multi-party in nature with the contest mainly oscillating between AIADMK and DMK. It adopted the policy of populism and welfare schemes for the poor, women and underrepresented sections like the Dalit. AIADMK relied heavily on the charismatic appeal of its leaders, like cine stars MGR, Jayalalitha, etc. MGR was the biggest and a very popular film star in the Tamil cinema. He with his roles of common man in Tamil cinemas enjoyed a large-scale mass appeal and could cut a

niche in people's mind with his charismatic personality and was able to sway away a large numbers of supporters in favour of his newly formed party. He would play in films the role of working man such as peasants, rickshaw puller, fisherman, taxi driver, etc. facing oppression, exploitation and fighting for justice. MGR emerged as the symbol of justice and hope for the poor and the downtrodden through his projected roles in films. He was seen as an incarnation of goodness. MGR was known popularly as idol of the masses.

In contrast to MGR, Karunanidhi was a film script writer with no public image and contact and was hence not able to cast any magic to garner mass appeal. The role of the film and cine stars in Tamil Politics is pervasive. Film has been a very important vehicle of mobilization and has been brilliantly capitalized by both DMK and AIADMK. Congressmen never assigned any importance to the power of film as a medium of mobilization and hence failed to expand its base in the state. Annadurai wrote dramas and screenplays on themes of social reforms, prohibition, widow remarriage, non-Brahmin self-respect ideals and on the importance of education. With the 1977 state election AIADMK came to power in the state and MGR was able to rule the state for a decade (Pandian, 1989, pp.PE-63-PE-64). With the 1977 state election the tally of seats of INC decreased miserably to 27 seats out of the 198 contested seats. Janata Party (JNP) fared poorly in the Tamil Nadu assembly polls by securing 10 out of the 233 contested seats with 16.67 percent of votes and 16.75 percent of seats. DMK which had already suffered a split could win 48 out of the 230 contested seats with 24.89 percent of votes and 25.26 percent of seats. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) emerged as the largest party by bagging 130 out of the 200 contested seats with 30.36 percent of votes and 35.36 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

With the 1980 assembly election INC (I) would capture 31 out of the 114 contested seats with 20.92 percent of votes and 43.44 percent of seats. Janata Party and its splinter groups drew a blank. AIADMK bagged 129 out of the 177 contested seats with 38.75 percent of votes and 50.73 percent of seats and formed the government in the state. DMK could secure 37 out of the 112 contested seats with 22.10 percent of votes and 45.70 percent of seats. GKC could win 6 out of the 10 contested seats, polling 1.71 percent of votes and 44.13 percent of seats. With the 1984 assembly polls AIADMK could bag 132 out of the 155 contested seats with 37.03 percent of votes

and 54.33 percent of seats and emerged victorious. DMK could win 24 out the 167 contested seats polling 29.34 percent of votes and 40.75 percent of seats. INC could bag 61 out the 71 contested seats with 16.28 percent of votes and 54.49 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

However, with the death of MGR in 1988 crisis eclipsed the popular party in the state. It got entangled into a friction over the issue of succession. A bitter infighting started over the issue of true inheritor of the party between his wife Thirumati Janaki Ramachandran and his close political aide, Jayalalitha and ultimately the party suffered a split (Sathyamurthy, 1989, p. 885).

### **The emergence of two-way Contest and the state party system**

Hence, with the 1989 assembly polls DMK emerged as the largest party by securing 150 out the 202 contested, polling 33.18 percent of votes and 38.70 percent of seats. AIADMK which suffered a massive split could win from 2 seats out of the four contested seats. ADK (JL) could bag 27 out of the 198 contested seats with 21.15 percent of votes and 24.99 percent of seats. ADK (JR) could win 2 seats out of the 175 contested seats polling 9.19 percent of votes and 12.18 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). DMK was gaining relevance in the state politics since the late 1980s when the anti-accord sentiment was brewing in the state against the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. The ethnic strife in Sri Lanka, the massive influx of Tamil refugees into the state and the growing ethnic sentiments due to the activities of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) helped DMK to regain its base in the state. DMK gained immensely from the fragmentation of votes between the various factions of AIADMK. However, on January 1990, Karunanidhi's government was dismissed and President's rule was imposed because of its alleged co-operation with Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) followed by deteriorating law and order situation in the state due to the growth of LTTE's strength and power along the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu. The government was further charged with issues like involvement in cases of corruption, nepotism, appointment of public officials based on partisan lines and acute water shortages were some of the other reasons for the electoral debacle of DMK (Manivannan, 1992, pp.166-168). With the 1991 assembly polls INC bagged 60 out of the 65 contested seats with 15.19 percent of votes and 56.23 percent of votes.

AIADMK<sup>69</sup> could win 164 out of the 168 contested seats, polling 44.39 percent of votes and 61.14 percent of seats. DMK won 2 out of the 176 contested seats with 22.46 percent of votes and 29.89 percent of seats. Patalli Makal Kachchi (PMK) could bag just a single seat. PMM drew a blank and TMK could win just 2 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). AIADMK-Congress alliance came to power in the state with Selvi J. Jayalalitha as the chief minister. In 1991, AIADMK benefitted from the alliance with Congress following the sympathy wave due to Rajiv Gandhi's assassination while he was campaigning in the state at Sriperumbudur (Manivannan, 1992, pp. 169-170).

With the 1996 election it was DMK which emerged as the largest party with 173 out of the 182 contested seats, polling 42.07 percent of votes and 54.04 percent of seats. ADMK could win just 4 seats. INC drew a blank and Tamil Manila Congress (Moopanar)<sup>70</sup> could bag 39 out of the 40 contested seats polling 9.30 percent of votes and 55.21 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). In 1996 Karunanidhi-led DMK came back to power due to tainted administration that was provided by the Jayalalitha government. It was marked by financial, real estate and sugar scams. The state administration was used for personal gains and she was seen flaunting an extravagant life by misutilising state's money. There was large number of caste-based riots during the 1991-1996 rule of AIADMK. The first tenure of Jayalalitha was marked by numerous scams. An Rs.66.65 crore disproportionate asset case surfaced during her 1991-96 rule. This was followed by the colour TV set scam which involved a case of dubious purchase which led to worth Rs.8.3 crore losses to the state exchequer. The plan was to distribute Television set along with cable connections with link to the JJ TV channel to the people in the rural areas so as to magnify the image of Jayalalitha and propagate her achievements and policies to ensure AIADMK victory. However, this plan was resented by other cable operators, more particularly by the SUN TV. Other corruption charges includes a profit making venture worth \$300,000 through a immunity scheme, Jayalalitha's caprice role in a coal import deal, purchase of

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<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile AIADMK unified into a single entity under the leadership of Jayalalitha. Earlier the Janaki Ramachandran's government which assumed power after the death of MGR was arbitrarily pulled down and President's rule was imposed in the state on January, 1988.

<sup>70</sup> It was formed in 1996 as a mark of protest against the decision of Narshima Rao to forge an alliance with AIADMK which was already tainted with charges like corruption, poor governance and it used political power to amass wealth and for personal gains. Hence large section of the Congress leaders headed by G.K Moopanar had serious reservations regarding allying with AIADMK for the 1996 assembly election. TMC (Moopanar) largely eroded the vote bank of Congress party in the state and scattered the vote of the Congress party.

TAMIN property besides amassing wealth of disproportionate value by setting up dubious companies<sup>71</sup>.

With the 2001 assembly election the trend of electing alternative government persisted. ADMK emerged as the largest party with 132 out of the 141 contested seats with 31.44 percent of votes and 52.08 percent of seats. DMK could win 31 out of the 183 contested seats with 30.92 percent of votes and 39.02 percent of seats. Congress could secure seven seats. CPI (M), CPI, AIFB (Biswas) could garner six, five and a single seat respectively. PMK could bag 20 out of the 27 contested seats with 5.56 percent of votes and 46.82 percent of seats. TMC (M) could secure 23 out of the 32 contested seats with 6.73 percent of votes and 47.49 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The AIADMK-led secular front comprising of Tamil Manila Congress (Moopanar), Tamizha Munnetra Kazhagam, the Congress, Patalli Makkal Katchi, the Left Parties obtained the required majority to form the government in the state with 196 seats with Selvi J Jayalalitha as the chief minister ([www.assembly.tn.gov.in](http://www.assembly.tn.gov.in)). The secular front had the support of an Independent candidate as well. The alliance of DMK with BJP by shedding away with its secular, anti-Brahmin traditional ideology failed to yield any electoral benefits for DMK<sup>72</sup>. The alliance of DMK with a band of caste-based parties like Puthiya Tamizhagam, Dalit Panthers, New Justice Party and Makkal Tamil Desam and others contributed negatively towards the electoral prospects of the DMK. The alliance had no major parties like PMK or Congress. Hence, Jayalalitha's brilliant alliance arithmetic enabled her to take control of the state mantle. Moreover, the lack of circulation of money among the petty traders, auto drivers, real estate dealers, grocers, working class people led to downslide in trade, industry and construction activity and created dissatisfaction among these sections, fall in prices of agricultural produce led to growth of dissatisfaction among the farmers, employment generation during the DMK rule was not satisfactory and these were some of the immediate causes of the electoral debacle of the DMK. The farmers were not getting remunerative prices, weavers were at losses due to recession and DMK led government made no efforts to help them and revive the industry. Lack of circulation of money affected the small-scale units. There was an acute labour problem due to closure of tanneries which had to be shut down on

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<sup>71</sup> A.S. Panneerselvan, "*Poes Garden to Prison*", 18 December, 1996, [www.outlookindia.com](http://www.outlookindia.com) (accessed on 29 April, 2016 at 11:30 am).

<sup>72</sup> "*A victory for the people: Jayalalitha*", The Hindu, May 14, 2001.

the orders of Supreme Court in the Tamil Nadu Tannery Pollution case. Farmers were dissatisfied because of the continuing problem of pollution due to the discharge of effluents from these tanneries. Hence its allies deserted it<sup>73</sup>. A sympathy wave was created during the 2001 election campaign in favour of Jayalalitha where she alleged that DMK is trying in every way to prevent her from filing nomination and fighting the election. She hinted towards a political conspiracy by the opponents<sup>74</sup>. She gave a call to end misrule of Karunanidhi and accused the DMK led government of not being able to maintain law and order situation in the state. She further accused that there was rise in extremist and separatist activities in the state during Karunanidhi tenure<sup>75</sup>. She accused the DMK government of corruption charges, such the scam related to cement price rise<sup>76</sup>. She even accused Karunanidhi of promoting dynastic rule by promoting his son, Stalin as the chief ministerial candidate in the 2001 election campaign<sup>77</sup>.

However, despite of such impressive performance in the assembly election, Jayalalitha was unseated from the position of the chief minister by the verdict of the Supreme Court and her appointment was termed as unconstitutional as she was convicted under the Prevention of Corruption Act. She was earlier sentenced to imprisonment to two years which also makes her appointment invalid<sup>78</sup>. Hence, Mr. O. Paneerselvam, the Revenue minister in the Jayalalitha ministry, was appointed as her successive chief minister<sup>79</sup>. However, she was acquitted of corruption charges by the High Court and she resumed her office from March 03, 2002 and continued till the end of her tenure.

With the 2006 assembly election AIADMK could bag 61 out of the 188 contested seats with 32.64 percent of votes and 40.81 percent of seats. DMK could win 96 out of the 132 contested seats, polling 26.46 percent of votes and 45.99 percent of seats and emerged as the largest party and formed a coalition government with Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi as its chief minister ([www.assembly.tn.gov.in](http://www.assembly.tn.gov.in)). Democratic

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<sup>73</sup> “Anti-people policies drove away DMK allies: Ramados”, The Hindu, April 25, 2001.

<sup>74</sup> “Jayalalitha to campaign with redoubled vigour”, The Hindu, April 25, 2001.

<sup>75</sup> “End Karunanidhi misrule”, The Hindu, May 02, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> “Jayalalitha to expose one scam a day”, The Hindu, April 30, 2001.

<sup>77</sup> “I am no CM candidate: Stalin”, The Hindu, May 03, 2001.

<sup>78</sup> Prior to the election there was uncertainty about Jayalalitha’s eligibility to contest the election and hold a public office for her alleged involvement in corruption cases such as the Jaya Publication Case and Sasi Enterprise Case in October 2000 during her previous tenures.

<sup>79</sup> “Successor a surprise choice”, The Hindu, September 22, 2001.

Progressive Alliance (DPA)-led by DMK along with PMK, INC and the Left parties won a comfortable majority with 163 out of the 234 assembly seats. PMK could bag 18 out of the 31 contested seats with 43.43 percent of seats and 5.65 percent of votes. INC won 34 out of the 48 contested seats with 8.38 percent of votes and 43.50 percent of seats. CPI (M) and CPI won 9 and 6 seats respectively (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress, PMK and the left parties switched over to DMK which emerged as the largest party in the 2006 assembly election. Earlier in 2001 these parties had allied with AIADMK which was then the largest party and facilitated the formation of AIADMK ruled government in the state. Congress has improved its tally of seat substantially along with PMK<sup>80</sup>. Hence, DMK's alliance with these parties reaped benefits for the party and elevated its stature as the ruling party with the 2006 assembly election. PMK, a political novice, has led to reconfigure the party system and has facilitated realignment in the party system by enabling the DMK to come to power in the state. DMK and AIADMK started to lose appeal among masses for its involvement in corruption, nepotism and inefficient administration. Therefore, political novices were largely becoming kingmaker and were switching allegiance as per convenience and were hence facilitating changes in the state party system. Hence building the right kind of alliance has become the order of the day to win elections in Tamil Nadu. Political novices were influencing the formation of government at both the state and national level.

However, series of corruption scams such as 2G<sup>81</sup> which involved many of the ministers of DMK tainted the image of the party and it was defeated with the next

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<sup>80</sup> Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) was formed in 1989 by Dr. S Ramadoss and it represented the interest and causes of the Vanniyar community, the largest caste group in the state, and through several agitations and demonstration by the party Vanniyar community was endowed with the status of most backward class for promotion of their educational, social and employment interests. The reservation system of 1987 enabled members of certain lower caste to hold official post based on quota system. However, the Vanniyars were not included and PMK was launched to fight for the inclusion of the vanniyaars by broadening the quota. It had been contesting elections since 1991 but was able to make feel its presence only with the 2001 assembly polls by securing 20 out of the 27 contested seats. See [www.elections.in/political-parties-in-india/pattali-makkal.katchi.html](http://www.elections.in/political-parties-in-india/pattali-makkal.katchi.html) (accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2016 at 01:20 pm).

<sup>81</sup> The distribution of the 2G licenses had come into question since 2008 when the audit report on the allocation of 2G spectrum was submitted by CAG to the Government of India. In the report it was pinpointed that the licenses were given at a throwaway prices. 2G scam involved improper allocation and improper licensing of the 2G spectrum. Department of Telecommunication had followed improper allocation policies ignoring the govt. allocation rules. This was done to benefit few private companies. This caused a loss of approximate Rs. 1.76 lakh crore to the national exchequer. Entry fee for spectrum licenses in 2008 pegged at 2001 market prices. The CAG also pointed out that DoT under A.Raja did not abide by the contracted quantity of 6.2 MHz and allotted spectrum to the operators beyond the limits without imposing upfront charges and without determining the present market prices. CBI is

assembly election. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had arrested A. Raja of DMK in relation to the 2G Spectrum scam who was the then Union Minister for Communication and Information Technology. Kanimozhi was another co-accused in the 2G case who was the daughter of Karunanidhi as well as a Rajya Sabha member. The corrupt image of the party eroded its chances of returning to the state mantle. Besides frequent power cuts which effected normal life, commerce and industry, rise of essential commodities, non-allotment of houses, denial of *pattas* to small and marginal farmers, unemployment, denial of house-site *pattas*, forceful acquisition of land for industrialisation, improper rehabilitation, forceful displacement for mega projects, dilapidated condition of the state economy, highhandedness of Karunanidhi's family members in every sphere, utilising politics as a family business, sibling rivalry over political opportunities between Alagir and Stalin presented a disunited picture of DMK and led to erosion of people's faith over the party. Hence, these factors had led to the electoral debacle of DMK-led DPA coalition government. Moreover, people resented the party's strategy to woo voters with freebies and cash in replacement of governance and development by the DMK-led government. Hence people of Tamil Nadu driven by the urge for a 'change' voted in favour of the alternative, AIADMK. Its alliance with Congress, the largest party of UPA, which was itself riddled with charges of inefficient governance and corruption charges at the national level contributed negatively towards the electoral fate of the DMK for the 2006 assembly election<sup>82</sup>.

Hence with the 2011 state election AIADMK emerged as the largest party with 150 seats out of the 165 contested seats with 38.40 percent of votes and 54.06 percent of seats. DMK stood distant second and could win 23 out of the 124 contested seats with 22.39 percent of votes and 42.20 percent of seats. PMK could win 3 seats and DMDK emerged as the second largest party with 29 seats out of the 41 contested seats, polling 7.88 percent of votes and 44.95 percent of votes. AIADMK-led Front could bag 203 seats while DMK-led front could secure 31 seats. AIADMK allied with parties like DMDK which bagged 29 seats, CPI (M) and CPI won 10 and 9 seats respectively, Puthiya Tamizhagam and Manithaneya Makkal Katchi could garner two seats each

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investigating the scam. The SC declared the telecom scam as India's most shameful scam. It highlights a vicious nexus between the government department, ministers and corporate lobby.

<sup>82</sup> See "Heat and Dust", Frontline, Volume.28, Issue.08, April 09-22, 2011.

(<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Jayalalitha was sworn in as the chief minister of the state<sup>83</sup>. The alliance between AIADMK and Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), a political novice in the state, paid manifold. DMDK was founded in September 2005 by Vijayakant who was a Tamil film star and had acted in more than hundred films. His support base mostly consists of his fans and hence the base cut across many sections such as Dalits, rich, poor, men and women, rural-urban inhabitants, backward classes, young and old. The Jayalalitha-led government underwent a crisis when she had to step down from the position of the chief minister after being convicted of corruption charges and was hence replaced by Paneerselvam<sup>84</sup>. Her arrest was followed by massive protests, agitations, rail roko, fasting, etc. by her supporters and cadres. However, she was acquitted by the Karnataka High Court of corruption charges in a disproportionate asset case. She resumed her office as Chief Minister on May, 2015<sup>85</sup>.

### **AIADMK Re-elected as the Popular Party**

The state of Tamil Nadu was poll-bound and conducted it in May, 2016. The contest was largely a six-way contest between DMK combine which comprises of Congress, Indian Union Muslim League and Manithaneya Makkal Katchi (MMK), AIADMK, and the newly formed People's Welfare Front (PWF)-led by DMDK of Vijayakant. PWF also comprises of Marumarlarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) of Vaiko<sup>86</sup>, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) representing the interests of the socially and economically weaker sections of the society, PMK, Tamil Manila Congress-led G.K. Vasan, the Left parties and the BJP<sup>87</sup>. However, it was AIADMK which swept the 2016 assembly polls by bagging 134 seats. DMK could win 89 seats. Congress won 8 seats and IUML could draw a single seat. PWF, PMK and the Left parties drew a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Jayalalitha rode back to power by brilliantly blending popularity with performance<sup>88</sup>. To widen her aura and appeal,

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<sup>83</sup> "Jayalalitha rides wave, decimates DMK-led Front", The Hindu, May 14, 2011.

<sup>84</sup> "Paneerselvam to be CM again", The Hindu, September 29, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> "Jayalalitha takes back the reins in T.N", The Hindu, May 24, 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) was formed in 1994 by V. Gopalswamy, an expelled leader of DMK, who had raised question about the tradition of dynastic rule of the Karunanidhi family within DMK.

<sup>87</sup> "Tamil Nadu polls: Vijayakant DMDK-PWF alliance's CM candidate", March 23, 2016, [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com) (accessed on 23 April, 2016 at 01:20pm)

<sup>88</sup> "Jaya Sworn in as CM for sixth time", The Statesman, May 24, 2016.

schools bags of girls featured her pictures, party members tattooed her face on themselves on her birthday, she featured on the forehead of brides and grooms in the form of head band in mass marriages organised during her last birthday. She even featured on the ornaments of women. Her popularity increased as she undertook massive social welfare initiatives such as opening canteens with subsidized food selling salt, bottled water, medicines, cements, maternity kit at subsidized rates. She resorted to extensive distribution of freebies which included distribution of uniforms, slippers, textbooks, notebooks, geometry boxes to school children, cycles to secondary school students, free distribution of goats, cows, four grams of gold to women getting married, old age pension of Rs. 1000 per month, free distribution of fans, grinders, mixers. These freebies made her popular among the women population as they catered to their needs and of their children. She has vowed to ensure greater pro-people services and hence promised to provide mobile phones to 1.92 ration card holders, free Wi-Fi services, free supply of 100 units of electricity to every, fifty percent of subsidy to women buying two-wheelers, financial assistance to pregnant women. Hence the well crafted popular schemes enabled AIADMK to fetch votes for itself and return to power with Jayalalitha as its Chief Minister snapping the tradition of Tamil Nadu since the late 1990s to swing between the two Dravidian parties.

### **The Features of the Tamil Nadu State Party System**

The party system in the state is competitive multi-party in nature. Social and economic cleavages led to sharp polarisation of the Tamil society. Hence political parties reflect social, economic, cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities. Mobilization based on identity markers is predominant and has shaped the state party system. Conflict over political opportunities is evident and hence factionalism and internal feuds is a prominent feature of the state party system. This has further led to growth of parties and has led to multiplicity of political parties in the system as well as fragmentation of the state party system. They have facilitated in the formation of government time and again and alliance politics has become a significant feature of the state party system. Coalition government has become order of the day. The state party system is marked by a strong presence of Oppositions. The multiplicities of political parties have rendered strength to the politics of Opposition in the state.

Populist mobilization targeting mostly the middle and lower socio-economic strata of the Tamil is a very determining factor that enables the formation and evolution of the state party system. The socio-economic status and caste identities are intertwined to mobilize voters. However, presently mediums like ethnicity or sub-nationalism, caste-based mobilization and charismatic appeal have been set aside to a great extent by both the political parties and the voters and the urge for development and good governance (populism) has become the priority and a determining factor that shapes the state party system.

## **Kerala**

The State of Kerala came into existence in 1956. In 1949, following the national policy of integration the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin (now Kochi) were unified into Travancore-Cochin state. Later on, the State of Travancore-Cochin was merged with the Malabar district and the Kasargod taluk of south Canara district to form Kerala per the States Reorganization Act, 1956 on the basis of linguistic lines comprising solely of Malayalam speaking districts in the state (<http://www.kerala.gov.in>). Before the reorganization of the state, the Congress Party has mostly remained in power. Prior to independence the state of Travancore and state of Cochin had representative government headed by Premiers. After independence, the Congress Party under the leadership of Pattam Thanu Pillai formed the ministry in the state of Travancore which continued to rule even after Travancore was merged with Cochin in 1949. After the merger of Cochin in 1949 the Congress under the leadership of Narayana Pillai remained in power.

## **The Two Heterogenous Fronts and the Kerala State Party System**

After the reorganization in 1956, the state of Kerala conducted its first assembly poll in 1957 when the first Communist ministry came into power in the state and E.M Sankaran Namboodirippad assumed office as the chief minister of the state<sup>89</sup>. Prior to

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<sup>89</sup> Before the first assembly election the Congress party under the leadership of Panampilli Govinda Menon was in power in the state. The government could complete its tenure as a vote of no-confidence was passed against the government and six Congressmen deserted the ministry in 1956 following which a second spell of President's rule was imposed in the state.

the election the state was under the rule of Praja Socialist Party (PSP). Pattom Thanu Pillai was in power with the outside support of the Congress. His ministry was pulled down in 1955 and was followed by a Congress ministry headed by P. Govinda Menon but could not complete its tenure because six Congress legislators deserted the party in protest against some recommendations of the State Reorganization Commission (Hartman, 1968, pp. 166-167). This made the political system unstable in nature and President's rule was imposed in the state. Communist Party of India (CPI) won the election of 1957 by winning 60 out of the 100 contested seats polling 35.28 percent of votes and 40.57 percent of seats and Indian National Congress (INC) could capture 43 out of the 124 contested seats polling 37.85 percent of votes and 38.10 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) could win just three seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Thus, with the first assembly polls Kerala exhibited a competitive multi-party system with CPI as the majority party. The CPI-led government which came into power in 1957 could not complete its tenure and was dismissed in July 1959 after a series of struggle and attempts of disruption by the opposition parties. Many of the legislations enacted by the Communist ministry did not satisfy the interests of numerous communities and castes. The first Communist ministry initiated an Education Bill which was vehemently opposed by the Church and the Land Reform measures found resentment from the Nair Service Society (NSS) which was founded in 1914. A joint liberation struggle led by the Nair leader Mannath Padmanabhan was launched against the first communist ministry and was accused of enacting legislations mostly favouring the Ezhavas (Pillai, 1987, p.599). The ministry faced a combined opposition from all the parties such as the Congress, the PSP, the Muslim League (MUL), Nairs and Christians which halted the smooth functioning of the government. In 1959, the CPI-led Communist government was arbitrarily pulled down by imposing Art.356 by the Central government headed by the Indian National Congress. From 1959 till February 1960 the state was under President's rule. The second assembly election of 1960 installed an anti-Communist coalition government consisting of Praja Socialist Party (PSP), the Congress and the Muslim League (MUL) in the state with Pattom A. Thanu Pillai as the chief minister of the state. The second assembly election transformed the state party system into a competitive multi-party and bipolarized party system with coalition governments. The CPI could secure 29 of the 108 seats with 39.14 percent of votes and 43.79 percent of seats. INC could win 63 out of the 80 contested seats polling 34.42 percent of votes and 45.37 percent of seats.

PSP bagged 20 out of the 33 contested seats whereas MUL won 11 out of the 12 contested seats and Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) drew a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress to retain its hegemony appointed Pillai as the Governor of Punjab in 1962 and appointed R. Sankar, an Ezhava Congress leader, as the new chief minister and he continued to serve the office till 10<sup>th</sup> September 1964. However, a no-confidence motion was tabled against the Sankar-led coalition government by the opposition<sup>90</sup> and it was supported by fifteen Congress legislators who were mostly loyal to P.T Chacko<sup>91</sup>, a powerful Christian leader, in September 1964 and eventually the state came under the President's rule. The state conducted its third assembly polls but no party was able to secure majority or emerge as the largest party. Congress secured 36 out of the 133 contested seats, CPI could win just 3 seats, and CPI (M) could bag just 40 out of the 73 contested seats. Kerala Congress (KC)<sup>92</sup> could secure 23 seats and MUL could bag just 6 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). CPI (M) could not form the government despite being the largest party because many of the Marxist ministers elected were then in prison (Nair, 1994, p. 252). Hence the President rule was extended till 1967.

Ultimately, in 1967 the CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) under the leadership of Namboodiripad took charge of the ministry by bagging 52 out of the 59 contested seats, polling 23.51percent of votes and 53.49 percent of seats. INC could win 9 seats, CPI could bag 19 seats. State-based parties like KC and MUL could capture 5 and 14 seats respectively (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With the 1967 assembly

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<sup>90</sup> A breakaway group of Congressmen under the leadership of K.N George voted against the Sankar ministry.

<sup>91</sup> The appointment of R. Sankar, an Ezhava, as the chief minister by the central leadership of Congress to reaffirm its hold over the state politics by replacing Pillai invited resentment from the Nair and the Christian communities as it meant greater Ezhava control within the government. The Chako group was headed by P.T Chako, an eminent Christian leader who constantly struggled to dethrone R. Sankar from the position of the chief minister of the state to reinstate their hold over the state mantle and to keep control over the state organisation.

<sup>92</sup> The Kerala Congress (KC) was established before the 1965 state election by the dissident Congressmen who belonged to the Chako group who had crossed the floor and deserted the Sankar ministry to hasten its downfall. KC had suffered numerous splits since the death of Chako due to differences of opinion, rivalry and aspiration for power by different leader time and again. Kerala Congress finds its base among the Christian community of the state. The party since its inception had suffered several splits and numerous splinter groups have emerged and played a significant role in the party system. In 1977 the party suffered its first split after the death of K.M George over the issue of succession. The tussle mainly revolved between Balakrishna Pillai and K.M Mani over the absolute control over the party affairs. Due to the tussle finally Pillai parted ways along with few other supporters and formed the KC (B) party. Later on K.M Mani too left the parent organisation and formed his own party KC (Mani) when differences of opinion erupted between him and P.J Joseph. The Kerala Congress has time and again suffered numerous splits. The Kerala Congress and its splinter group have time and again allied with the two alternate fronts, namely, the UDF and the LDF.

polls the Kerala party system got transformed into a competitive multi-party bipolarized system with coalition government. Due to the nationwide anti-Congress vote, Kerala too witnessed the birth of an anti-Congress opposition Front which was headed by CPI (M). The constituents of the Front were CPI (M), CPI, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Sanghatha Socialist Party (SSP), Karshaka Thozhilali Party, Kerala Socialist Party (KSP) and Muslim League. INC could fetch for itself very less number of seats (<http://www.niyamasabha.org>). Moreover, the formation of Kerala Congress (KC), the then political novice in the state, in 1964 eroded many of the Congress votes and led to significant reconfiguration and the realignment of the party system. In 1969 the CPI (M)-led Namboodiripad government resigned as it lost its majority in the assembly as many of its cabinet ministers from CPI, Muslim League, Indian Socialist Party group, RSP and KSP tendered their resignation. C. Achutha Menon of CPI became the new chief minister of the state and took over the leadership of the government along with constituents such as the Muslim League, Kerala Congress, Indian Socialist Party (Nair, 1994, p. 252).

The state went into polls in 1970 and C. Achutha Menon-led CPI government came back to power and it could complete its tenure. CPI secured 16 out of the 29 contested seats polling 8.67 percent of votes and 41.90 percent of seats. CPM won 29 out of the 73 contested seats with 23.83 percent of votes and 43.35 percent of seats. INC bagged 30 out of the 52 contested seats polling 17.63 percent of votes and 44.41 percent of seats. MUL fetched 11 out of the 20 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The RSP with 6 seats and the PSP with 3 seats joined the front. Congress (R) joined the front later on and KC joined the front when emergency was declared (Nair, 1994, p. 253). Following the 1977 state election, the Congress-led United Democratic Front came to power in the state with K. Karunakaran of the Congress party as the chief minister of the state. The Front comprised of Congress, CPI, KC, Muslim League, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), National Democratic Party (NDP) and Praja Socialist Party. INC captured 38 out of the 58 contested seats with 20.02 percent of votes and 52.63 percent of seats. CPI won 23 out of the 27 contested seats and CPM secured 17 out of the 68 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Although the period of the late seventies saw rise of the Janata party at the central level as well as in many states but the Janata Party couldnot make much inroads in the state of Kerala. The Janata Party had joined the Left Democratic Front which could not secure majority in the

assembly. However, Karunakaran had to step down and tender his resignation due to the Rajan case in which an engineering student was murdered in the police custody (Nair, 1994, p. 260). A.K Antony succeeded him as the chief minister of the state on April 27, 1977. A. K Antony too resigned on October 1978 following differences of opinions with the Congress Working Committee (CWC) in 1978 and P.K Vasudevan Nair became the new chief minister of the state. However, he too had to relinquish his post due to a fiasco between the CPI and RSP over the Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill. He was succeeded by C.H Mohammed Koya of Muslim League on October 1979 along with the support of the Antony Congress. Koya had to resign as the Congress (Antony) withdrew its support from the Koya Ministry on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979 and President's rule was imposed in the state and the Assembly was dissolved. With the assembly election held in 1980 the CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) came to power in the state. The LDF constituted of CPI (M), CPI, Congress (Antony), Kerala Congress (M), RSP, AIML (All India Muslim League), Kerala Congress (PG). The UDF failed to cross the halfway mark (<http://www.niyamasabha.org>). CPI won 17 out of the 22 contested seats with 7.80 percent of votes and 51.28 percent of seats. CPM bagged 35 out of the 50 contested seats polling 19.35 percent of votes and 52.44 percent of seats. INC (I) won 17 out of the 53 contested seats and INC (U) fetched 21 out of the 31 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The LDF came to form the government in the state with E.K Nayanar as the chief minister. However, the heterogeneous Front could not provide a stable governance as ideological disparity among the ruling partner made the government inefficient in nature. Hence, Congress (Antony) withdrew its support from the ministry. Finally, Nayanar had to resign when eight member of the Kerala Congress (M) withdrew its support from the LDF ministry. The state came under President's rule in 1981. Congress (Antony) and Kerala Congress (M) crossed the floor and joined UDF. In December 1981, the Governor invited Karunakaran to form the ministry. The Karunakaran government too collapsed when a member of Congress (M) later withdrew his support and this resulted in the downfall of the ministry. President's rule was imposed for the seventh time in the state. Mid-term poll was held in the year 1982 and UDF ministry with Karunakaran was again sworn in as the chief minister. The UDF consisted of Congress (I), Congress (Antony), Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), Kerala Congress (J), Kerala Congress (M), Janata (G), National Democratic Party (NDP), SRP, RSP (S), PSP, DLP and an Independent candidate

(<http://www.niyamasabha.org>). INC occupied 20 out of the 36 contested seats, polling 11.90 percent of votes and 47.17 percent of seats. CPI won 12 out of the 25 contested seats and CPM secured 26 out of the 51 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). LDF failed to secure a majority in the assembly. The Karunakaran ministry could complete its five year tenure.

The state conducted its assembly polls in 1987 and LDF emerged victorious and formed the next government in the state under the leadership of E.K Nayanar with a clear majority on the plank of democracy, socialism and secularism. The LDF comprised of CPI (M), CPI, IC(S), Janata, RSP, Lok Dal and five Independents (<http://www.niyamasabha.org>). UDF was reduced to the position of an opposition party. BJS drew a blank and INC could fetch 33 out of the 76 contested seats polling 4.02 percent of votes and 41.72 percent of seats. CPI secured 16 out of the 235 contested seats. CPM bagged 38 out of the 70 contested seats polling 22.86 percent of votes and 45.31 percent of seats. Lok Dal won a single seat. RSP won 5 out of the 6 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The LDF ministry was dissolved earlier by the complacent Nayanar<sup>93</sup> and early polls were announced. However, the Nayanar led-LDF could not repeat its performance as was expected by Nayanar. UDF emerged victorious in the assembly election held in June 1991 with 89 seats and K. Karunakaran was sworn in as the chief minister of the state. It was again a coalition ministry and it comprised of INC, ML, KC (M), KC (B), CMP, NDP and few Independents (<http://www.niyamasabha.org>). The INC bagged 55 out of the 91 contested seats with 32.07 percent of votes and 47.86 percent of seats. CPI won 12 out of the 24 contested seats and CPM won 28 out of 68 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). In 1995 Karunakaran became a Union minister and was replaced with A.K Antony as the chief minister during the last one year of the UDF rule in the state.

However, with the 10<sup>th</sup> assembly polls LDF coalitional Front emerged victorious. The LDF was composed of CPI (M), CPI, Janata Dal Congress (S), Kerala Congress (J) and RSP. CPM won 40 out of the 62 contested seats polling 21.59 percent of votes and 47.12 percent of seats. CPI bagged 18 out of the 22 contested seats with 7.62

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<sup>93</sup> LDF emerged victorious in the district council polls and won 323 out of the 472 divisions and 13 out of the 14 district councils in Kerala and this instilled gallons of confidence in Nayanar and he announced early polls in the state. See T.M Thomas and S.Mohana Kumar, "Kerala elections, 1991: Lessons and Non-lessons", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 26, No.47, 1991.

percent of votes and 48.75 percent of seats. INC secured 37 out of the 94 contested seats polling 30.43 percent of votes and 44.62 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Nayanar was again appointed as the chief minister in the LDF coalition government in May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1996. The 11<sup>th</sup> assembly election replaced LDF with the UDF coalition ministry. UDF swept the 2001 assembly polls with a two-third majority winning 99 out of the 140 seats. LDF combine could secure 40 seats. UDF won the election with the support of BJP and People's Democratic Party (PDP), a pro-OBC party of Abdul Naseer Madani. INC could bag for itself 62 out of the 88 contested seats polling 31.40 percent of votes and 49.04 percent of votes. CPM won 23 seats with 21.36 percent of votes and 44.72 percent of seats. CPI captured 7 out of the 22 contested seats. MUL won 16 out of the 21 contested seats. KEC secured two seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). A.K Antony was appointed as the chief minister of the state on May 2001. However, he later on resigned from the post of the chief minister on August 29, 2004. Assuming the moral responsibility for the poor performance of the UDF in the Lok Sabha election in May 2004 Antony tendered his resignation to Governor R.L Bhatia<sup>94</sup>. However, his step was sarcastically criticized by opposition minister Vijayan, a CPI (M) leader. He accused that the poor performance of the UDF under the leadership of A.K Antony, corruption charges, internal bickering between the Karunakaran group and the Antony group, factionalism, inefficient handling of law and order situation by the State Police, especially in the case of Muthanga incident involving Police atrocities upon the *adivasis* (tribals) who were agitating for restoration of their land under the leadership of C.K Janu, rising prices, communal violence in Marad among the fisherfolk which was not handled properly by the State administration, rise in power tariff, rampant privatization of education, curtailing subsidy in PDS system, etc. are some of the real reasons that prompted the Congress High Command to go for the leadership change in the state of Kerala<sup>95</sup>. Mr. Oommen Chandy was unanimously elected by the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) as the 19<sup>th</sup> chief minister of the Kerala to steer the UDF ministry<sup>96</sup>. LDF emerged victorious with 2006 assembly polls and V.S Achuthanandan was sworn in as the new chief minister of the 19 member LDF cabinet<sup>97</sup>. LDF emerged victorious with two-third majority and the combine bagged 98 out of the 140 assembly seats. UDF secured 41 seats. CPI (M) bagged 61

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<sup>94</sup> "Antony resigns, take responsibility for the electoral debacle", The Hindu, May 30, 2004.

<sup>95</sup> "Leadership change cannot solve the problem: CPI (M)", The Hindu, August 31, 2004.

<sup>96</sup> "Oommen Chandy is new Kerala CM", The Hindu, August 31, 2004.

<sup>97</sup> "19 member LDF cabinet assumes office today", The Hindu, May 18, 2006.

out of the 85 contested seats with 30.45 percent of votes and 49.40 percent of votes. INC won 27 out of the 77 contested seats polling 24.09 percent of votes and 43.84 percent of seats. CPI occupied 17 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). 2006 LDF government failed to translate much of their promises into action. LDF and CPI (M) in particular was riddled with factional feuds between the Pinarayi Vijayan group and the Achuthanandan group. The education policy of the 2006 LDF government found resentment among the Christian run educational institutions and the Muslim voters. Moreover, LDF failed to perform in the areas like maintenance of roads, control price rise, infrastructural developments, failed to create jobs, etc. seriously wrest the chances of the LDF combine to come back to power in the state with the 2011 assembly polls. The 2011 assembly polls brought UDF back to power in the state and Oommen Chandy as the chief minister of the state. UDF bagged 72 out of the 140 seats, just four more seats than LDF<sup>98</sup>. The assembly polls almost produced instances when hung assembly seemed inevitable. The election could have produced any results and could have proved to be an aberration by breaking its traditional norm of electing alternative fronts after every five years<sup>99</sup>. The seven party LDF fared well in the state election. The pro-‘VS’ factor enabled LDF increase its share in the number of seats. He undertook an extensive campaign defying his physical limitations. Moreover, the mega corruption scams in the centre and in the state<sup>100</sup> involving the Congress and its allies jeopardized the popularity of the Congress in the country and V.S Achutanandan had exploited this issue to its core and this had an impact upon the number of votes and seats share of the UDF in the 2011 Kerala state election. Therefore, the margin of victory was the smallest. The UDF had secured 4 more seats than LDF. CPI (M) had, in fact, emerged as the largest party in the assembly with seven more seats than Congress. CPI won 13 seats and CPM won 45 out of the 84 contested seats polling 28.18 percent of votes and 44.99 percent of seats. INC won 38 out of the 81 contested seats with 26.40 percent of votes and 45.60 percent of seats. BJP drew a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

BJP had undertaken attempts to make inroads in the state of Kerala with the 2015 assembly polls as part of its strategy to widen its national base before the next general

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<sup>98</sup> “*UDF posts victory by a whisker in Kerala*”, The Hindu, May 14, 2011.

<sup>99</sup> In Kerala no political fronts gets elected to govern for a second tenure in succession.

<sup>100</sup> Muslim League leader, P.K Kunhalikutty’s image was maligned by highlighting his involvement in a sex scam. KC (B) leader, Balakrishna Pillai was sent to jail on corruption charges and this tarnished the image of the Congress-led UDF government.

election so that it can retain its dominant position in this competitive multiparty system. The state has established its trend of electing alternative fronts with each assembly since 1967. BJP has alleged that the CPI (M) has resorted to political violence to suppress the surge in support of the party in the state. BJP has alleged that several of its workers were attacked by the CPI (M) workers in Thiruvananthapuram and one of its RSS workers was brutally killed to scare away people and discourage them in rallying behind the party<sup>101</sup>. BJP had alleged that the ruling Congress and the Left Front are resorting to violence to suppress their presence in the state's political map. BJP allied with the Bharat Dharam Jana Sena (BDJS), a new party in the state representing the backward Ezhava community of the state to increase its electoral prospects in the state. BJP has not been able to win seats in the assembly polls till date. Congress led- UDF aspired to retain its hold over the state mantle although it was reeling under the charges of corruption in solar and bar bribery scams<sup>102</sup>. In the 2011 assembly election it emerged victorious by a whisker. Pro-VS factor, corruption charges against the UPA II at the national level had enormously elevated the electoral fate of the LDF in the state. Moreover, Communist Marxist Party (CMP), a breakaway of the CPI (M) party had rejoined the LDF combine along with Janathipathiya Samrakshana Samithi (JSS) of communist leader K.R. Gouri. Kerala Congress (Democratic) of Francis George, a breakaway group from KC (Mani) might also join the LDF in the upcoming polls of May 16, 2016. Moreover, UDF due to its involvement in solar, bribery, sexual harassment scams fought the recent election without allies like Janata Dal (U) and RSP. The "corruption" issue had been the main plank of the election campaign of the LDF combine for the recent assembly election riding on which it came to power along with its emphasis on development and welfare agendas<sup>103</sup>. The brutal killing of the Dalit girl on the eve of the election, the land scam, infighting within the Congress state unit was added disadvantages for the UDF that led to its electoral debacle. The LDF came to power with the 2016 state election thereby maintaining its trend of electing alternate fronts with each election. The LDF swept the polls with 91 seats in the House of 140 and UDF stood distant second with

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<sup>101</sup> "BJP blames Cong-CPI (M) nexus for violence against its workers in Kerala", Business Line, March 16, 2016.

<sup>102</sup> K.M. Mani, the finance minister of the ruling Congress led- UDF government, has been accused of accepting bribe for renewal of licenses to 470 Indian made liquor bars in the state. The Congress-led UDF is also throttled with charges of corruption in solar scam worth crores of rupees against chief minister Oommen Chandy and power minister Aryadan Mohammed.

<sup>103</sup> "Kerala hit by scams, controversies in 2015", The Economic Times, December 18, 2015.

47 seats<sup>104</sup>. Congress has lost credibility among the masses at large due to its frequent involvement in corruption cases.

### **The Features of the Kerala State Party System**

Power struggles is what drives the politics of the state. The party system is a competitive multi-party system which remained fragmented and bipolar since the 1960s. Coalition politics and alliance politics is a dominant feature of the Kerala politics till date. The party system remained riddled with factionalism, group politics, shifting alliances, party mergers and splits, birth of splinter groups. Hence, the party system was marked by multiplicity of political parties in the state that saw the birth of numerous parties such as Kerala Congress, Muslim League, the Communist Marxist Party (CMP) of M.V Raghavan who was expelled from CPI (M), Democratic Indira Congress (Karunakaran) that time and again have played burgeoning influence over the formation of government in the state. Groups based on caste, religion, and community has maintained their hold on state politics. Ezhavas, Nairs, Muslims, Christians have dominated state politics and have influenced government formations by joining one front or the other by promoting and safeguarding their political, social and economic interests. Interests groups such as the Nair Service Society (NSS), Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalanayogam (SNDP), Muslim League, Kerala Congress has time and again enabled formation or downfall of government since 1959 in the state politics. The aspirations of these groups determine the course of politics in the state. The party system is highly unstable and heterogeneous in nature with allies frequently shifting fronts giving the state alternate governments of UDF led by Congress party and LDF led by CPI (M).

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<sup>104</sup> “Massive LDF surge even as lotus blooms”, The Hindu, May 20, 2016.