THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM AND PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE STATES SINCE 1989

A Thesis submitted to the University of North Bengal

For the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

By

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Under the Supervision of

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May 2018

DECLARATION

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THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM AND PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE STATES SINCE 1989

MOULI DEY

Abstract of the Thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, 2018

Abstract

The evolution and the nature of the Indian Party System have always attracted scholarly attention. Scholars like Rajni Kothari (1964 & 1974), Myron Weiner's (1971), Anindaya Saha (1999), James Manor (2002), Balveer Arora (2002, 2003), Pradeep Chibber (2004), E. Sridharan (2002 & 2011), Prakash Sarangi (2005), Zoya Hasan (2007), Diwakar (2017) etc. all have written at length on the nature and features of the Indian Party System. There are some studies on the nature and changes that have taken place on the state party systems as well like that of Sridharan (2002 & 2011). We note that the Indian Party System has always remained in a state of flux. Thus it becomes imperative to study what has led to these changes at various stages. The party system is said to have been moving from a one-party dominated system to a multi-party system, from a period of social and ideological cohesive coalitions to factionalism and hence fragmentation, from stability to fluctuations and instability. The Indian Party System has in fact made a long journey. Similarly different patterns of state party systems have emerged from a Congress dominated one. The Indian party system has become fragmented at two levels. This pattern of fragmentation (is the outcome of numerous factors that in fact impact the trajectory of the Indian party system) is discernible at the state level since 1967 to till date.1Hence it is very well

[1] In MP, Rajasthan, HP, Karnataka, and Gujarat and in Delhi the party system has largely became a two- party system with the contest mainly oscillating between the Congress and the BJP. In other states such as Punjab, Bihar, J &K, Andhra Pradesh, Assam the contest for power revolved around state-based parties and either of the two national parties, viz. Congress party or the BJP. Tamil Nadu had a different story where since 1967, the nature of the party system had become bipolar in nature with the competition revolving between the two leading state -based parties, namely, DMK and AIADMK and the Congress which till 1967 was the ruling party.

discernible that the Indian party system does not possess a uniform character and exhibits a fragmented character due to various reasons.

The Research Problem

The Congress however was able to come to power at the centre with the 1980 and 1984 election recuperating the downslides of 1967, 1971 and 1977 elections but again with the 1989 elections it was seen that no single party was able to secure absolute majority and this led to the consolidation of the coalition era. However, the Indian Party system did not lose its multi-party based fragmented character. Although a series of other developments like the rise of National Front, United Front and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have taken place but the Indian party system did not shed its multi-party fragmented character. This feature had cemented its base more pronouncedly since 1989 when Congress party slipped into the state of deep decline both at the central and state level. Although no other party was able to replace the Congress but it was seen that the BJP was in the position to emerge as an alternative force to the Congress (I) as it was able to improve its position in the Lok Sabha from 2 to 85 (Andersen, p.532, 1990) and was able to form a government with the 11th general election by bagging 161 seats polling 20.29 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in).2 With the 12th general election BJP had established itself as a political force to reckon with. In 1998, BJP again came to power by securing 182 seats but could not complete its term over its dissensions with its allies and ultimately in 1999 with the thirteenth general elections it formed its coalition government under the banner National Democratic Alliance (NDA) of which it was the leading partner and completed a full tenure. This made a profound impact on the Indian Party system which again reoriented itself into a bipolar multi-party system. Since then it has been claimed that at the central level the party system has mainly oscillated between the Congress party and its significant competitor, the Bharatiya Janata Party. In the Indian party system the role of the regional parties was no less insignificant. They helped in the

[2]It remained in power for two weeks. BJP and its allies could manage to accumulate just 194 seats which were far away from the required 272 seats needed to prove its majority. BJP failed to enter into any coalitional arrangement required to come to power and therefore it had to step down.

realignment and formation of government at the centre and in the states. These two significant developments have made huge impact in the Indian party system thereby making changes in its configuration. If observed the Indian Party System has no uniformity as the state level and the national level and is marked by different type of state party systems. More particularly, since 1967 we can see that state have chosen to have their distinct party systems3.

However, with the 2004 general election the equation witnessed a reverse swing when again the INC surpassed all the other parties and scored 147 seats to form the coalition government at the centre under the banner of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) of which it was the leading partner thereby replacing the BJP-led NDA government. However, a dramatic shift took place in the Indian party system with the 2009 election. With the 2009 election the INC improved its performance by 86 seats securing 206 seats alone and 262 seats were bagged by UPA of which INC became a leading partner (www.eci.nic.in). With the 2009 general election the BJP led NDA stood distant second with 159 seats (www.eci.nic.in). Many of the regional parties who had earlier played a significant role in the Indian Party System got marginalised to a great extent when lot many of the king makers like the Rashtriya Janata Dal, Lok Janshakti Party, Telegu Desam Party were cut to size. The party system witnessed a significant realignment when the then dominant Congress party again came to the forefront as the leading partner of UPA. Since then the UPA headed by the Congress party had played a much more assertive and a dominating role. However, the dynamics started changing when again the Congress led UPA government was being charged of incompetence when it was not able to tackle the issue of rising prices, corruption in the backdrop when the UPA's significant ally DMK got involved with the charges of some serious cases of corruption namely the 2G scam, CWG Scam, etc. All these circumstances contributed positively to the prospects of the BJP and other contenders for power. All these developments led to changes in the Indian Party system and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government was dislodged from

[3] With the 1967 elections the Congress failed to emerge victorious with a clear majority in almost nine out of the then existing sixteen states which included Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala.

power and in a turn of event Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government came to power. BJP emerged victorious with the 2014 Lok Sabha election with absolute majority of seats. However, it opted to form the government at the union level with its pre-poll allies. These developments led to significant changes in the Indian party system. Besides, factors like cleavage, conflicts, identity, etc. in my opinion *"aspirations"* (for growth, development, social justice and equity) of the populace has assumed a significant importance that happens to determine the trajectory of the party system at both the levels. Hence, factors like *Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism* largely influence the trajectory of the Indian party system at both the national and state level. Hence an effort has been made with this study to see how these above discussed factors influence elections (both general and state polls) and thus bring transformation in the Indian party system at both the national and state level.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the work was to study the Indian party system since 1989, identify its features, analyse the nature of the state party systems and its features which have acquired its own distinctive characteristics and identify the reasons behind the bifurcation between the national and state party systems. Through my work we have also seen what changes the Indian party system has gone through with the 16th general election when the ruling government headed by the Congress was showing signs of decline due to corruption, scandals etc. The work has as well studied the changes that have occurred in the state party systems with the subsequent state assembly elections. The work also explores how factors like popularity, positivism, populism and performance cast impact upon the party system at both the national and state levels.

Research Questions

Through my work I have tried to answer some research questions such as the following:

a) What are the central features of the Indian party system since 1989?

b) What are the various causes that have contributed to the changes in the nature of the Indian Party System in the recent period? Trace how the decline of the Indian National Congress, the growth of the BJP and the expansion of the Regional parties bring transformation in the Indian Party system.

c) Identify what are the central features of the state party systems that have evolved since 1989? Locate the factors that have contributed to the growth of the various state party systems in different regions of the country.

d) What are the factors that have contributed towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and state level in the absence of any similarity between the state party systems and the National party system?

e) Discuss what are the factors that will bring changes in the Indian Party System and the state party systems in the near future?

Party System can be conceived as a constellation of numerous political parties who compete to come to power and form government to deliver governance. With regard to India because of its heterogeneous composition the party system has been largely multi-party in nature. However, if defined structurally it has been largely one party dominated for long as also mentioned by Rajni Kothari (1964) in his article entitled "The Congress system in India". Through the article he has tried to show that India largely had a one-party dominant system where the Indian National Congress (INC) had enjoyed undisputed hegemony. The Congress party has assumed the role of a “party of consensus” and gave enough room to the ‘parties of pressure’ that had existed as independent force (Kothari: 1964). Other political forces too existed but had played rather understated roles. To Kothari, mediated politics by the Congress party had prevented other parties from gaining in strength and this had enabled the Congress Party to emerge as the dominant

force during the post-independence period. Chapter 2 of the thesis explores the various reasons that propelled the process of the bifurcation (in the early years of 1960s) of the Indian party system into national and state party systems. The Congress Party after independence made efforts to emerge as the popular party. It cultivated a nationalistic support base for itself, it adopted secularism to increase its support base and besides employing several other strategies to emerge as the popular party it concentrated on building a well-knit organisation for it to widen and consolidate its support base in the country. Due to these various reasons INC could surpass other parties (such as Hindu Mahasabha, Congress Socialist Party, Swaraj Party, etc.) in terms of influence and came to power. However, it could just emerge as the "majority party" and not a dominant party because with successive elections due to various political developments its performance decreased in terms of number of seats and votes and it even occupied the position of an opposition party for numerous times. The party system was multi-party in origin where INC in few general elections could just bag for itself more than half of the parliamentary seats in the absence of any potential alternative. Factors like the Indo-China War of 1962 (which highlighted nations' military unpreparedness) which shattered Nehru's popularity, fall in food grain production, over emphasis on industrialisation, origin of class conflict due to partial benefits of green revolution, defection, conflicts over political opportunities, regionalism, etc. are some of the reasons that led to initiation of the process of the bifurcation of the party system into national and state level. Chapter 2 also enlists some basic reasons for the fragmentation of the party system into two levels. With the bifurcation of the Indian party system the Indian party system has become more fragmented in nature. Anti-Congreeism, rise of regional outfits, birth of new aspirants for political power due to circulation of elites from lower to higher levels, growth of regionalism in lesser developed areas to combat the truncated economic, agricultural, industrial and growth policies of the then Congress-led central government are some of the reasons for the fragmentation of the country. Besides, the chapter enlists some of the features of the Indian party system, namely, fragmentation, politics based on populism, rise in multiplicity of political parties, factionalism, etc. Chapter 3 and 4 concentrates on discussing the

numerous factors that led to growth of state party systems. Politics driven by self-motives, conflicts over political opportunities, rift between upper caste and lower caste, unsatisfactory performance by ruling government, rise in identity-based politics, quota politics, the urge for good governance lace with social justice, equity and comprehensive development, etc. are some of the reasons that encouraged the growth of multiple state party systems. Chapter 5 concentrates on the idea that any changes in the party system at the both the national and state level in recent years are driven by four parameters namely, Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism. Although other factors like cleavages, ethnicity and identity will tend to dominate the course of Indian politics and the party system at both the national and state level but these four parameters will have an edge over these factors. Hence the 14th, 15th, 16th Lok Sabha and the subsequent assembly elections has been discussed to testify to this fact that how Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism are largely determining and shaping the course of Indian Party System at the national and state level. Chapter 6 deals with the conclusion which summarizes the entire discussion on the topic. Hence it can be fairly concluded that the Indian party system is characterised by two variance of the party system. Numerous reasons have facilitated in the process of this bifurcation which in turn has made the Indian party system fragmented in nature. Each state vote by taking into consideration numerous state-specific issues. However, in present times factors such as populism (pro-people/populist policies and strategies), performance, popularity (of a political leader/party) and positivity (ability to raise hope with conviction by a political leader/ party for a better tomorrow) tend to influence the voting behaviour of the Indian masses. Factors such as cleavages, identity, conflicts, etc. have being set aside to a large extent by the Indian masses as their urge for a better tomorrow or their inclination for comprehensive development have become a significant barometer that guided their electoral logic. Based on these factors the electorates cast their vote. Parity between proclamations (in the form of manifestoes, programmes, vision documents, poll promises, etc.) and performance (by the ruling national/state government) is the crux behind survival and sustainability of a political party in power.

Academic Significance of the Study

This particular endeavour of ours is academically significant and relevant since it is necessary to understand the reasons for the changing nature of the Indian party system since 1989 and the changing state party systems in the different regions of the country. Local political parties also plays a significant role in influencing and shaping of state party systems hence the study will figure out the role of local parties (or the newly formed political novice) in the state party systems and its impact on it which has not been done in the study of state party systems. Prakash Sarangi (2005) in his article ‘‘Economic Reform and Changes in the Indian Party System’’ is also of the opinion that the Indian party system has undergone several transformations since independence. He is of the opinion that economic development and economic reforms have a direct bearing on the nature of the party system which influences the voting behaviour of the masses. Regionalism has been the outcome of it and has led to the fragmentation of the party system. Hence, growth of newly formed parties (mostly political novice in the state)[4] or local political parties can be studied which cast an impact on the party system by either splintering votes or accumulating votes which subsequently either wrest or facilitates the chance of victory for the main contenders for power. This multiplicity of political parties tends to realign party system and keep it bifurcated and fragmented in nature. Moreover, the thesis encapsulates how the parameters like performance, popularity, positivity, populism has directed the course of Indian party system in recent times more particularly since 2004 Lok sabha elections and the subsequent assembly elections. Anindya Saha (1999) in the article “The Indian Party System 1989-1999” has mainly discussed about the transformation, reconfiguration and realignment in the Indian party system both at the national and state level till 1989. Following these he has tried to analyze the causes that has led to these series of transformation of the once Congress dominated Indian party

[4] Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, the political novice in the state of Maharashtra influenced the vote share of Shiv Sena and BJP in the 2009 lok sabha and assembly polls. Similarly BSR Congress and KJP have also splintered votes of BJP in the recent 2013 Karnataka assembly polls. Party system is full of such novices and they influence verdicts immensely and lead to significant reconfiguration and realignments.

system. Growing mass consciousness, lack of established political cultural, departure of Congress party from consensual politics and regionalization of party politics, etc. are some of the important reasons for the reconfiguration of the Indian party system. In fact with the passage of each successive year if observed carefully, then it is the performance of the ruling government or government delivering on the line of social justice and equity are having better chance of survival. However, the author has not explored this reason in detail. Hence my work emphasizes on the study of 14th, 15th and 16th Lok Sabha elections and subsequent assembly elections to testify to the fact that how these parameters namely, popularity, positivism, performance and populism are largely steering the course of the Indian party system at both the national and state level.

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List of Abbreviations

AGP	Assam Gana Parishad
AICC	All India Congress Committee
AIADMK	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
ADK (JL)	Anna Dravida Kazhagam (Jayalalitha)
ADK (JR)	Anna Dravida Kazhagam (Janaki Ramachandran)
AITC	All India Trinamul Congress
AIUDF	All India United Democratic Front
AVP	Ambedkar Village Programme
BJD	Biju Janata Dal
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
BLD	Bharatiya Lok Dal
BKD	Bharatiya Kranti Dal
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CFD	Congress For Democracy
CLP	Congress Legislature Party
CMP	Common Minimum Programme
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI (ML)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)

DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kahagam
DMDK	Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam
EBC	Extremely Backward Caste
HAM	Hindustani Awam Morcha
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
INC	Indian National Congress[1]
IND	Independent Candidate
JD	Janata Dal
JD (U)	Janata Dal (United)
JKD	Jan Kranti Dal
JNP	Janata Party
JNP (SC)	Janata Party (Socialist)
JNP (SR)	Janata Party (Secular)
JMM	Jharkand Mukti Morcha
KEC	Kerala Congress
KCM	Kerala Congress (Mani)
LDF	Left Democratic Front
LJNSP	Lok Jan Shakti Party
MBC	Most Backward Caste
MDMK	Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MP	Member of Parliament

[1] Known at various points of political development by various names such Congress (R) and Congress (I). INC here has also been referred as Congress Party or as INC.

MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MNS	Maharashtra Navnirman Sena
MUL	Muslim League Kerala State Committee
NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
NCO	Indian National Congress (Organization)
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NF	National Front
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
OBC	Other Backward Class
OGP	Orissa Gana Parishad
PMK	Pattali Makkal Katchi
POTA	Prevention Of Terrorism Act
PSP	Praja Socialist Party
PWP	Peasants and Workers Party of India
RJD	Rashtriya Janata Dal
RPI	Republican Party of India
RSP	Revolutionary Socialist Party
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDF	Sikkim Democratic Front
SHS/SS	Shiv Sena

SIMI	Student's Islamic Movement of India
ST	Scheduled Tribes
SP	Samajwadi Party
SSP	Sangatha Socialist Party
SULFA	Surrendered United Liberation Front of Assam
SVD	Samyukta Vidayak Dal
TDP	Telegu Desam Party
TMC (M)	Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar)
TRS	Telangana Rashtriya Samiti
UDF	United Democratic Front
UF	United Front
ULF	United Left Front
UKD	Uttarakhand Kranti Dal
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VCK	Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
Y-M	Yadav-Muslim

Chapter I

Introduction

Research Problem

A party system is comprised of numerous political parties that share an intricate relationship among themselves and they coexist and compete with each other over power sharing. Political parties are an indispensable part of the party system as well as that of a representative democracy like India. Indian party system is unique in its own way and has always remained vibrant and has maintained its buoyancy. The vast menu of choices (in terms of political leaders/ parties) makes it flexible in nature. The fragmented nature of the voting pattern of the Indian electorates made it inconsistent in nature. The status of the Indian National Congress in the Indian party system has often been exaggerated as is evident from the seminal work of Rajni Kothari (1964) entitled *"The Congress system in India"* where he has described the Indian party system as the 'Congress System'. However, it is very well discernible that even during the era of undisputed rule of INC at the national level few of the state's opted for non-Congress alternatives such as Kerala, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir[1]. Hence the party system of a single country stands fragmented in nature, getting bifurcated into national and state level party systems ever since the predominant Congress era when Congress was the ruling party for more than a decade in most of the states and at the national level.

Each state has its own distinct party system. Hence it can be stated that Indian party system was never uniform in nature and infact became more fragmented in nature with each election. This trend is visible since 1957 and more particularly since 1967. Hence an attempt has been made through this work to sketch the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian party system through electoral verdicts. The work will also see how the states have voted for different political hues with each assembly

[1]In Jammu and Kashmir it was the National Conference which was the ruling party in 1962. In Kerala, too, the CPI-led government had come to power during the era of Congress dominance during 1957-1959. With the 1960 assembly election in Kerala, INC could not bag majority of seats and formed the government in alliance with PSP and Muslim League. Nagaland too had a non-Congress government during a predominant Congress era headed by Naga National Organization with its first assembly election after it became an independent state in 1963.

elections. We notice that various factors had been in play to make the party system bifurcated into two levels. Hence through this work an attempt has been made to identify some of the (most significant) factors by studying some of the selected state party systems that have facilitated the bifurcation of the Indian party system into two levels. My work will also sketch the role of newly formed political parties or political novices as they have made a significant impact upon the Indian party system at both the levels by splintering or accumulating votes as well as by facilitating realignment and reconfiguration of the Indian party system. Party system not only reflects conflicts, cleavages, ethnic demands and rifts, regional demands, etc. it strongly reflects the 'aspirations' of the masses as well. Electoral verdicts show that party system also manifests people expectations (from the party/coalition in power) and desire to develop in all walks of life. Hence through the work attempts have been made to study the recent elections (general as well selected state assembly polls) of 2004, 2009 and 2014 to see how 'aspirations' of the Indian masses guided their electoral logic. Therefore, through the work we will study to what extent parameters like popularity, positivity, performance and populism have been adopted and employed by political leaders and parties which in turn made an impact upon the trajectory of the Indian party system at both the levels of the Indian party system. Hence, in order to seek answers to these research problems some question become pertinent. In this work we have made an attempt to seek answers to certain questions.

Research Questions

The specific questions which we have raised and answered in the thesis are as follows:

1. What are the central features of the Indian party system since 1989?
2. What are the various causes that have contributed to the changes in the nature of the Indian Party System in the recent period? How have the decline of the Indian National Congress, the growth of the BJP and the expansion of the Regional parties bring transformation in the Indian Party system?
3. What are the central features of some of the selected state party systems that have evolved since 1989? What are the factors that have contributed to the growth of the various state party systems in different regions of the country?

4. Is there any similarity between the state party systems and the National party system? If not what are the factors that have contributed towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and state level?

5. What changes are likely to take place in the Indian Party System and the state party systems in the near future?

Objective of the Study

There are several objectives of the study. The central objective is to study the Indian party system since 1989 and to identify its features. Besides the central objective the work also enlists the political developments that led to the changes in the Indian party system at the national level. Attempts have been made to trace the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian party system through the aid of electoral data and enumerate some of the selected reasons for the fragmentation of the Indian party system into two levels- the national and the state level. We also look at some of the selected distinct state party systems that had evolved in the several regions of the country. The work also enumerates some of the most immediate factors that have led to the bifurcation of the Indian party system between the national level and state level for few of the selected state party systems. The study also analyses the features of the studied selected state party systems. We have made an attempt to study how the parameters like popularity, populism, positivity and performance have dominated the course of the 2004, 2009, 2014 general elections and the subsequent state assembly elections of the studied selected state party systems.

Review of Literature

Any work which is related to the Congress and the party system in India must begin with a reference to the celebrated work of Rajni Kothari (1964) entitled "The Congress system in India". Through the article he has tried to show that India largely had a system which can be characterized as one-party dominant system where the Indian National Congress (INC) or the Congress party had enjoyed undisputed hegemony. The Congress party has assumed the role of a “party of consensus” and gave enough room to the ‘parties of pressure’ that had existed as independent force.

Other forces too existed but had played rather insignificant roles. To Kothari, mediated politics by the Congress party had prevented other parties from gaining in strength and this had enabled the party to emerge as the dominant force during the post- independence period. However, it has been stated in this article that the party has ruled due to the consensus that prevailed among the people. It had been in power due to the popular verdict of the people in favour of the party and not through the indiscriminate use of power or force. But he has failed to provide an evaluative account of the performance of all the Congress ruled governments that existed since 1952 till 1964. It is mainly descriptive (describes the nature of the party system) and analytical (points out why the Congress party was able to maintain its hegemony) in nature and not evaluative in its approach. However, considering the fact that Congress was in power since the first general election both at the centre and in most of the states, the author has therefore sought to define the system as the congress system. However, despite the significance of the article in the study of Indian politics and party system the author could not predict the breakdown of the 'Congress system'.

Rajni Kothari (1974) in the article, ‘‘The Congress System Revisited: A Decennial Review’’ has reviewed the meaning of the congress system and its various features. In the article Kothari has described the model as the model of historical experience, a model of relationship between politics and society and a model of legitimizing the political system and its values. He has tried to sketch the change and continuity of the ‘congress system’ based on some eight criterion (see p. 1038).

Kothari has also tried to analyze the present status (continuity and change) of the congress system and has argued that despite of the 1967 debacle the congress system on the whole has remained intact. According to him, some significant developments had taken place in the system such as change in the composition of the congress as a party, many new elements or competitors has entered the system but despite of it the system has maintained some amount of continuity. He also argued that the congress system has on the whole served India well (p. 1040). He has asserted that the operative mechanism of the system of one- party dominance has not undergone any changes based on the analyses of electoral and factional trends since 1967. To Kothari the congress system maintains its dominance on the basis of legitimate authority. However, Kothari has predicted that when at the national level there will be emergence of one or more other parties of consensus besides the congress party then

only the congress system will slip into a state of decline.

In this article he had advised to take note of the growing consciousness of the electorate which might become a significant reason for the reconfiguration in the position of the congress system. The issue of legitimacy of the congress system may suffer a setback if it fails to deliver or perform. Similar idea has been conveyed by Ashish Nandy as well. According to Ashish Nandy a ruling system loses its legitimacy because of stagnation and deterioration in the living condition of the masses. When the system which is in power fail to deliver or perform then only it loses its legitimacy to rule. Towards the end of his discussion he has offered some ways which to him the Congress should adopt and apply to plug its loophole so that it can maintain its position as the ruling party. To conclude he has not ruled out the possibility of a change in the system because to him the model has the capacity to adapt itself and respond to the changing conditions.

However, this article appears as a defence of his former article "The Congress System in India" (1964) which was sort of celebratory epilogue of the Congress system. However the article is helpful since it provides some useful insights and prediction regarding the future of the Indian party system. This article can be considered as more analytical in nature in comparison to his former work 'Congress System in India' (1964).

Myron Weiner's (1971) article ''The 1971 Elections and the Indian Party System'' is primarily concerned with the 1971 elections in India. The 1971 general election was a very important election from the context that it has established Congress (R) as the real Congress party and has relegated Congress led by the syndicate as the opposition party. Therefore, Weiner (1971) through this article has endeavoured to discuss the 1971 election and the impact of the results of this election on the Indian party system. To him the 1971 general election was a challenge for Mrs. Gandhi to establish Congress (R) as the real Congress party. According to Weiner, Mrs. Gandhi had to fight back various hurdles such as there was no national mass media; she also lacked a party organization in every constituency, as well as had no single dramatic national issue. However, despite of these contingencies Weiner feels that it is the opposition parties that have contributed to Mrs. Gandhi's victory by singling out Mrs. Gandhi as their prime target rather than offering any national leader as an alternative.

The author in his article has not failed to bring into notice one of the most significant feature of this election which is the rise in vote share of the regional parties and of independents. In the 1971 election in eight of the eighteen states the first or second largest party, in terms of popular vote, was a regional party. A section of the article also contains discussion on regional parties, their rise and fall along with a discussion on the consequences of 1971 parliamentary election. Hence it happens to be an important contribution to the available literature on the Indian Party System.

The article 'The Crisis of Indian Party System' by A. G. Noorani (1980) mainly discusses about the various break- away groups and factions that have acted as opposition parties and have aspired to take the control of the mantle of power thereby replacing the Congress party. This development, to Noorani, has subsequently made the Indian party system face numerous crises both at the national and state level. Through this article the author had tried to offer a very clear picture of the Indian politics since 1948 when the Congress Socialist Party was formed and existed as a break- away group from the Indian National Congress. The author has done a very meticulous job. Although the author has talked about polarization at both the level but had not suggested any corrective measures to arrest these crises which had actually made the Indian party system volatile and fluctuating. The article is poor in terms of citation and references. The author for compiling this article has drawn heavily from secondary resources but at the same time is a replica of the then contemporary events or developments in the Indian party system.

Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (1987) in their book "In the pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State" have tried to point in the chapter entitled 'Decline of Congress dominance and the emergence of a Bifurcated Party System' that the dominance of the Congress party had diminished with the 1984 election because the party was ousted from power in most of the states and a new party system was thus born. They have in fact tried to show that the return of the Congress back to power after the downfall of 1977 was not comprehensive because it had suffered a breakdown in its support base in Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India and the disadvantaged minorities had also deserted the Congress at large. They had also pointed towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and the state level and have hinted towards the growth of a coalition and alliance politics.

However they have failed to classify the nature and the type of the new party system that has according to them developed since the 1980s.

Anindya Saha (1999) in the article "The Indian Party System 1989-1999" has mainly discussed about the transformation, reconfiguration and realignment in the Indian party system both at the national and state level till 1989. Following these he has tried to analyze the causes that has led to these series of transformation of the once Congress dominated Indian party system. He is of the opinion that electoral law, the principle of federalism and politics based on social cleavage has led to the bifurcation of the Indian party system. However, apart from these reasons growing mass consciousness, lack of established political cultural, departure of Congress party from consensual politics and regionalization of party politics, etc. can also be considered as some of the other important reasons for the reconfiguration of the Indian party system. In fact with the passage of each successive year if observed carefully, then it is the performance of the ruling government or government delivering on the line of social justice and equity are having better chance of survival. However, the author has not explored this reason in detail.

The author has not used any primary resources. The work is mainly based on secondary resources. The footnotes do not provide much extended information. They contain mainly names of references. Despite of it the work can be considered as an important contribution to the existing works on Indian party system.

The article "Fragmentation of the Indian party system" by E. Sridharan (2002) has dealt with the phenomenon of the fragmentation of the Indian party system. To explain the fragmentation of the party system he has grouped the entire process into various phase beginning from 1952 till 1967 when the Congress enjoyed the hegemonic position which later on suffered electoral reverses in as many as nine states. The shifts in the party system has been verified and analyzed by the author in terms of shifts in vote share and seats share. He had also discussed about the process of bipolarization of the state party system and has offered seven explanation or reasons for the fragmentation of the party system. Sridharan has earmarked early 1967 as the period from when the fragmentation of the party system started followed by a discussion on the evolution of the trend of alliances in the party system both at the national and state level. However, we beg to disagree with the author's view that evolution of alliances has led to lesser poles. In fact, the party system in both the

level, national and state has become much more polarized in recent times. The work is weak in terms of footnotes. The footnotes do not clarify any idea or terms neither are they in the form of some extended points. The footnotes are just name of sources for further references. The work is weak in terms of citation as well.

Balveer Arora (2002) in his article "Political Parties and the Party System: The Emergence of New Coalitions" has strongly argued that regional and state based parties had actually led to significant changes in the Indian party system. One of the major reasons for fragmentation of the party system has been the growth of state specific interests and aspirations. Growth of alliances and coalition politics has enabled these parties to have a greater share in the task of governance. Arora through his article has tried to uphold the increasing influence and rise of the state- based and regional parties in the Indian party system. The parties are anti-Congress in nature and have grown at the expense of the Congress party. He has also provided an account of the various stages of the growth and transition of the Indian party system. The author has been able to apprehend well that in the near future the state- based parties will continue to stay and influence the functions of the political system.

Peter Mair (2002) in his article "Comparing Party System" has reviewed all the principal approaches applied for classification of party systems. He has endeavoured to review the existing typologies of Duverger, Dahl, Blondel, Rokkan and Sartori. Of the existing typologies Mair has accorded priority to the classification provided by Sartori. He has used classification based on number of parties and ideological distance to typify the party system. Followed by this Peter Mair has discussed about the structure of competition that exists in any given party systems. However, Mair has claimed that electoral change is not the cause but the consequence for party system change. However, this proposition of the author can be applied to the Indian context so as to examine and analyse the reasons for such drastic changes in the Indian Party System.

James Manor (2002) in his article 'Parties and the System' has tried to provide a valuable insight into the Indian party system and have tried to study it by categorizing into various phases starting from 1947 to 1967 when the congress party had enjoyed considerable dominance in the Indian party system. To him changes in the political parties have bearing upon the changes or transition in the Indian party system. The second phase was demarcated from 1967 to 1977 when Congress for the first time

faced decline in its state of dominance and was ultimately defeated in the 1977 election when the Janata party came to power. The third phase was demarcated from 1984 onwards. He was of the opinion that factors like defection, increase in mass consciousness and the need for development as well as the performance by the ruling government all have an impact upon the Indian party system and often leads to truncated verdict from the masses which further leads to the changes in the party system.

Zoya Hasan (2002) in her article ‘‘Conflict, Pluralism and the Competitive Party System in India’’ has similarly tried to categorize the different phases of the party system along with providing reasons for the decline of one party dominance of the congress party. She has also held that the rise of the BJP has led to the reconfiguration of the party system. The article also contains discussion on the growth of the two party systems at the state level. She has even referred to about the growth of the alliances and coalition politics in Indian Politics.

Balveer Arora (2003) in his article ‘‘Federalization of India’s party system’’ mainly tries to argue that emergence of a single or multi state parties at the national level as coalition parties has enabled these parties to represent their issues at the national level. This had led to the elevation in their stature. Federalization has led to the termination of monopoly that the national level parties had always enjoyed at the central level. For convenience Arora has taken up federalization as an analytical concept to explain the ‘changes’ that the party system has undergone since the post Congress dominated era. This article concentrates on the Indian party system which to Arora has undergone far reaching changes. He has also tried to look at the various dimensions and contours of the party system. According to Arora the party system has become binodal in nature since the 1990s.

The term fragmentation is certainly suitable to describe India’s party system because the delinking of the national level and state level election has led to the fragmentation of the party system. However, there is no continuity in the nature of the party system at the national level as well. Neither does all the state possess a uniform type of a party system. In fact, it can be stated that federalization has led to the fragmentation of the Indian party system.

He also points out that state based parties (single or multi-state) have gradually

represented and influenced politics at the national level apart from producing full term majorities at the state level in most cases. This characteristic further highlights the federal nature of the party system. Besides, according to Arora growing mass consciousness and federal structures and institutions has also contributed towards the federal nature of the party system. In short the author has conglomerated under one roof various causes which is leading towards federalization of the party system. However, he has not provided any opinion as to whether this trend, i.e., of federalization of the party system would in the near future jeopardize the smooth functioning of the political process.

In the article, "Do party system count? The number of parties and Government Performance in the Indian states" (2004) Pradeep Chibber and Irfan Nooruddin has argued that difference in party systems across the states leads to variations in government performance or delivery of public services across the states in India. In their opinion, political parties engaged in two- party competitions are likely to deliver more public goods than those who have to make decisions in the context of a multi-party environment. According to Chibber and Noruddin, it is so because in multi-party system parties have to mobilize particular segments of the population and they do not have to reach social groups to the same degree as political parties in a two-party system does (pg.9). In a multi-party system parties have to focus on their voting blocs as any loss of support from this group could lead to defeat. Hence parties in multi-party systems provide state resources directly to targeted groups.

Hence, in the opinion of the authors, in multi-party system parties mainly provide club goods whereas in two party system parties focus more on providing public goods as they have to cater to a large segment of the citizens. Thus, it appears that the authors are of the opinion that people under two-party system get enhanced public services than people in multi –party system. However, considering the situation where the competition for power has accentuated to such a great extent, a two- party system has become a rare possibility. Hence, this makes the findings in the paper debatable and impractical.

Prakash Sarangi (2005) is also of the opinion that the Indian party system has undergone several transformations since independence. His article ''Economic Reform and Changes in the Indian Party System'' has tried to show that economic development and economic reforms have a direct bearing on the nature of the party

system. He has also held that these two factors even influence the voting behaviour of the masses. Regionalism too has been the outcome of it and has led to the fragmentation of the party system. Through this article he has also tried to discuss the various phases of the party system since independence commencing from 1952 till 1967 as the period of one party system. He has categorized the second phase from 1967 to 1989 and has dubbed it as the period of polarized pluralism and the third phase, i.e. from 1989 onwards as the period of segmented pluralism. The article tends to draw too heavily from secondary resources. The author has not made any effort to provide any new conceptualization despite of the fact that the topic he has chosen to write upon is contemporary in nature. The author could have easily attempted to interpret and conceptualize the terms like fragmentation, polarized pluralism, segmented pluralism or federalization, etc. in his own way as this would have enabled the author to offer his reader with something 'new'. However what the author offers, as it appears, is a compiled note on change in the party system because of economic reforms process since the 1990s.

Zoya Hasan (2007) in her article ''Congress after Indira Gandhi: Decline or Revival?'' has hinted towards the signs of revival by the Congress party as a revitalized force since the 2004 Lok Sabha election partly due to some drawbacks of the BJP led NDA government and also due to the incorporation of the democratic agenda in the course of action and in its election manifestoes. The shift in ideological positions, organizational refurbishment had also contributed to the revival of the Congress party as has been pointed out by Hasan. The discussion however does not try to see the changes, reconfiguration and realignment in the Indian party system due to the revival of the Indian National Congress from its state of decline.

Zoya Hasan (2011) in her article "Political Parties" has discussed the role of political parties in democratic consolidation and its success although she has not missed the opportunity to discuss the demerits of party politics as well. Hasan has also discussed about the various transformation and reconfiguration that the political system has witnessed due to the rise and fall of INC and growth of new opposition parties as well the Bharatiya Janata Party. However, the author through the article has also tried to show how the rise of regional parties has led to the fragmentation of the party system.

However, one of the significant developments in the political system has been the consolidation of coalitional politics which has now become the order of the day. This

in turn has made Indian parties much more pragmatic than ideological, which according to the author has made party boundaries more flexible than permeable. In other words, ideology has been replaced by pragmatism to a large extent. Hence, according to the author, both national and state level parties have become pragmatic to gain a share of political power. In a word, Hasan has tried to show how political parties are causing changes in the party system.

The article has also discussed about one of the serious problems confronting the Indian political parties which are lack of internal democracy within the party structure. Hasan has also enlisted some other serious problems as well which ranged from nexus between politics and corporate sector, failure on the part of the political parties in power to keep electoral promises or reduce social inequalities. Parties that exist primarily for interest articulation and interest aggregation of the nation are now seen mostly engaged in wooing the demands of the big business houses. The article is very relevant and useful in understanding present day party politics. The article aptly traces the contemporary scenario and trends of modern day party politics and hence is an important contribution to the literature on Indian politics.

E. Sridharan (2011) in his article "The party system" has discussed the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system since the 1952 first general election. Through the article the author has also provided an overview of the party system and has focused on the electoral trajectory of the political parties and their evolution in the party system. Besides, the author has also provided several explanations to explain the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system. E. Sridharan has also discussed about various alliances and coalitions that has emerged to challenge the hitherto hegemonic position of the Congress party in the Indian party system. In this article he has categorized the party system into various phases.

This article is analogous to E. Sridharan's former article, 'The fragmentation of the Indian Party System' published in 2002 in Zoya Hasan edited "Parties and Party Politics in India". However, in this article he has provided an extended discussion on the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian Party System till 2009. In his earlier article he had discussed the pattern of fragmentation only till 1999.

In the article "The new party system: Federalized and Binodal" Balveer Arora and K.K. Kailash (2012) has tried to show how Indian Party system has become binodal

structurally with Congress and BJP at two opposite poles. According to them, emergence of coalitional politics has made party system federalized in nature with the increase in trends among the single-state and multi-state parties becoming coalitional partners at the centre. However, with the onset of the trend of regionalization more particularly since the 1980s the party system had become federalized in nature, only that it had become more pronounced in recent times. The authors have defined the present party system as a new form of competitive multi-party system. In the article the authors have tried to describe the present nature of the Indian Party System. However, with the rise of various "fronts" in recent times in the Indian Party System the structure no more remains only binodal in nature. Hence, the Indian Party System cannot be aptly described as binodal in nature although its federalized character has become more pronounced in recent times. The recent work by Rekha Diwakar (2017) entitled 'Party System in India' is interesting and provides an analysis of the Indian party system through its various phases-from a congress party dominated system to a BJP centred party system.

Party system is an indispensable component of Indian politics and has always attracted scholarly attention. It has also attracted scholarly attention because of the dramatic changes that it has witnessed since independence. It has produced surprising results with its vast menu of choices. It has facilitated realignment in power structure and the basic dynamics of the society. Various scholars have time and again attempted to study the changes that the Indian party system has undergone and have offered various reasons to explain the changes. The Indian party system had always undergone sea changes and these add to quite a messy picture of the Indian party system. The Indian party system is said to have moved from a one -party dominated system to a multi- party system, from cohesion to coalitions.

The literature reviewed demonstrates how numerous developments in the system had led to the downfall of the Congress system. The writings of Arora, Sridharan, Zoya Hasan, Rudolph & Rudolph etc. deal with the breakdown of the Congress system and the subsequent realignments and changes in the nature of the Indian party system. However, despite of the literature available its volatile nature since independence keeps it on the focus. It is because of this my interest in this study has grown. Hence we will make a naive attempt to study the Indian party system by emphasizing more on the changing nature of the Indian party system since 1989 on which there are few

studies. Besides, my work will make an effort to analyse the role and impact of the small parties on the Indian party system. Apart from it my work will try to study whether formation of regional and local parties have led to availability of more choices at the disposal of the voters and whether this leads to fractured verdict and facilitates realignments and fragmentation of the Indian party system.

Beside these, the work will also study the 2004 and 2009 general election and the subsequent assembly polls and try to analyze and figure out their effects on the nature or the structure of the party system as well as categorize the recent features of the Indian party system. With the next 16th Lok Sabha election knocking at the door my study will also make an attempt to see the consequences and the changes that might take place with the 16th general elections on the Indian party system. However, the work will look at both the national and state level party systems. The work will also see how in present times not just cleavages, identity and conflicts determine the course of Indian party system. Rather parameters like *Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism* tend to impact the course of the Indian party system at both the national and state level. Hence by studying the general and the state election efforts have been made to see how these parameters are employed to fight election and how they tend to cast an effect on the electoral verdicts.

Data and Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary materials have been used to complete the work. Primary materials include election manifestoes, pamphlets and other documents such as resolutions, Press briefings and releases, reports, monthly journals published by the various political parties, books and monographs of various political parties. In addition to it, information from the website of various political parties has been used as well. Hence, the websites of various political parties such as www.aicc.org.in, www.bjp.org,www.dmk.in,www.cpimwb.org.in,www.aiadmkallindia.org,www.aitmc.org, etc. has been referred to compile this work. Besides websites of various state governments such as http://www.kerala.gov.in,http://www.kerala.state.org, http://up.gov.in,http://www.cm.uk.gov.in, etc. and state assemblies http://www.vidhansabha.bih.nic.in,http://www.wbassembly.gov.in,http://www.assama

ssembly.gov.in/ala-since-1937.html, http://www.niyamasabha.org, etc. has been used to extract information mainly quantitative in nature for writing this work. Election results have also been used for this work which has been drawn from the website of the Election Commission (http://www.eci.nic.in). Besides, observation can also be used as a method to collect the data which will include holistic description of events and behaviour.

The work also required extensive use of secondary resources. Secondary resources that have been used to study the topic included books, journals, magazines. Information and data collected from various newspapers such as The Hindu, The Statesman, The Telegraph, Times of India, Hindustan Times, Economic Times, The Indian Express, Business Standard, etc. has been used along with vernacular newspapers. Internet has been used as a mode of extracting relevant data for conducting the study and therefore sites like www.google.com and www.jstor.org has been referred to get access to innumerable referred journals such as Economic and Political Weekly, Mainstream, Seminar, Asian Survey, Asian Affairs, The Journal of Asian Studies, Modern Asian Studies, Far Eastern Survey, Pacific Affairs, Comparative Political Studies, etc. The data thus collected has been analyzed and interpreted for which the content analysis of the various materials has been made.

Chapters:

The study has been arranged in the following chapters:

Chapter I : INTRODUCTION- Statement of problem, Research Questions, Review of Literature, Objective of the Study, Data and Methodology. The primary materials used in the study are of various kinds and they can be divided into two parts mainly:

i) Documentary sources of various kinds have been used mainly party briefings, party literature and manifestos collected from the party offices and internet.

ii) The second source of primary material that has been used is the official statistics from the Election commission website and other state agencies. The data collected from the election commission website is

mainly quantitative and they have been analysed and used in the study. Information from State Government websites and State Assembly websites were also collected and has been used in the study.

The methodology applied to analyse the data is basically content analysis. Graphs have been used to represent the data using official statistics from the website of election commission and Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation website.

Chapter II : The Evolution of the Indian Party System and the Indian Party System since 1989.

The chapter tries to see how the rising dissidence among the colonized Indian population since the early 19th century led to birth of a party system in India. As well as by using classical definition of Giovanni Sartori and Maurice Duverger attempt has been made to show how the Indian party system was never a Congress pre-dominated system rather the Congress party was just a majority party in the competitive multi-party system. The chapter discusses the reasons for the decline of the popularity of the Indian National Congress since the late 1960s till the late 1980s. Moreover, through the chapter attempt has been made to classify the nature of the national party system since the first general election till 1989 general election.

Chapter III : The Fragmentation of the Party System in India since 1957.

The Chapter has made an attempt to sketch the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian party system through electoral verdicts. Besides, the chapter also discusses some of the prominent reasons for the bifurcation and fragmentation of the Indian party system into two levels, namely, national and state. Besides, the chapter also enlists some of the prominent recent features of the Indian party system as well as some of the significant reasons for the demise of the Congress (I) since

1984 that further aggravated the trend of fragmentation of the Indian party system.

Chapter IV&V : Emergence of Multiple Fragments: A study of the Selected State Party Systems.

Both the chapters study some of the significant state party systems. These chapters also discuss various factors that led to bifurcation of the Indian party system and rise of distinct state party systems. The chapters also enlist the features of these state party systems and the role of the political novices in realigning and reconfiguring the state party systems.

Chapter VI : General Elections (2004-2014) and the Indian Party System: Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism.

The Chapter focuses on how parameters like populism, performance, popularity and positivity have directed the course of the lok sabha elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014. This chapter has made an attempt to see how through devising populist policies political parties contesting elections promises to satisfy the pangs of hunger for comprehensive development and through vigorous election campaign by a popular leader raises people's hopes and aspirations to achieve development for an developing nation. However, survival and continuity of a popularly elected government depends on the symmetry between 'proclamations' and 'performance'.

Chapter VII : Conclusion.

The chapter summarizes the discussion on the topic. Circulation of new political elites and with diminishing returns from Congress as a party and as a government, scattered voting pattern of the Indian electorates, lack of any strong allegiance to any particular political party, the rising aspirations of the common masses for a better tomorrow, etc. were some of the reasons that led to fragmentation of the Indian party system. The trend of fragmentation led to rise in emergence of multiple

fragments. The state party system portrayed numerous features which were distinct from the other. Although initially numerous factors such as cleavage, identity, regionalism, conflicts over political opportunities, etc led to changes in the Indian party system and kept it fragmented in nature but with passing years factors like populism, performance, popularity and positivity tend to impact electoral logic of the Indian masses. The study of the 2004, 2009 and 2014 general and state elections done amply testify to this claim. It can be fairly concluded that symmetry between rhetoric and action can ensure continuity and survival of a ruling government.

Chapter II

The Evolution of Indian Party System and the Indian Party System till 1989

Time and again the INC had been given the status of a party which made the Indian party system. On the contrary, other political parties also existed in the canvas of the Indian political system. However, due to various reasons INC could surpass other parties in terms of influence and come to power. However, it could just emerge as the 'majority party' and not a dominant party because with successive elections due to various political developments its performance decreased in terms of share in the number of votes and seats and it even occupied the position of an opposition party for numerous times. The party system was never a Congress system. It was multi-party in origin where INC in few general elections could just bag for itself more than half of the parliamentary seats in the absence of any potential alternative. Through my chapter I have tried to sketch the evolution or rise of the Indian party system and then describe the nature of the Indian party system since its inception. Besides, I have tried to show the position of the Congress party, one of the most significant and veteran political party that has since independence occupied a notable position in the Indian party system. With the first general election and assembly election Congress emerged as the "majority party" in the Indian party system. Along with that I have also tried to include in my chapter the various developments, mostly political, that has facilitated changes in the nature of the Indian party system and led to subsequent reconfiguration of the party system at both the levels. The chapter also includes discussion of the general and assembly election results since 1952 till 1989 and have subsequently tried to show the changes in the party system from a 'Competitive Multi-Party System with Congress predominance as a majority party' to a 'Competitive Multi-Party System which remained Fragmented and Bipolar since 1967' followed by a 'Partial restoration of Congress as the majority party in a fragmented multi-party system' and then I have tried to show how the trend of coalitional politics stabilized since 1989 using electoral verdicts.

The Rising dissidence

The various socio-religious reforms[1] and political protest[2] to colonialism in India during the early half of the nineteenth century eventually led to mass awakening in the country. The spread of western liberal ideas among the middle class urban intelligentsia consisting mostly of government's servants and professional people, protest against the then social evils and the consequent reform movements along with the freedom movement against the exploitative divide and rule colonial regime of the British Raj during the nineteenth century sowed the seeds of evolution of the party system in India.[3] The series of reform movements and movement for freedom from the British rule in India led to the emergence of a nationalistic consciousness among the masses in the country.[4] These movements stood against the exploitation of the

[1] Nineteenth century India was crippled by numerous infected religious and social beliefs and practices and British conquest facilitated its regeneration. Idolatry, polytheism, precarious status of women in the society, caste related atrocities were some of the few social and religious evils. Raja Rammohan Roy from Bengal ushered the movement for reform with the formation of Brahmo Samaj, a monotheistic reformist and renaissance movement of Hindu religion in 1828. Apart from it, there were some other movements like the Paramahansa Mandali and the Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra and the Arya Samaj in Punjab and North India. There were several other regional and caste movements like Kayasth Sabha in Uttar Pradesh and the Sarin Sabha in Punjab. The spirit of reform was felt by the backward caste too and therefore initiated the movement with Satya Sodhak Samaj in Maharashtra and the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sabha in Kerela. The Muslim, Sikh, Parsees were also a part of these reform movements with the Ahmadiya and Aligarh movement, the Singh Sabha and the Rehnumai Mazdeyasan Sabha respectively. Akshay Kumar Dutt, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Vivekanada were some of the other leaders providing leadership to bring religious reformation that can facilitate social reconstruction of the society. Raja Rammohan Roy fought for social upliftment of the society and abolished Sati, banned child marriage. Vidyasagar stood for widow remarriage, education for girls, etc. Ranade, Dayanand, Vivekanand denounced the then existing caste system and social segragation. All these reform movements whether social, cultural or religious aroused conciouness of the masses against the colonial culture that has seeped into the soil of the India with the British conquest.

[2] The Revolt of 1857, the Peasants movements such as the Indigo Revolt of 1859-60, series of peasant riots in Assam during 1893-94, the Mappila outbreak of Malabar and others and Tribal movements such as the Santhal outbreak of 1871-72, the rebellion of the Munda tribesmen led by Birsa Munda during 1899-1900, etc., the Revolutionary Terrorists and the Ghadar and Home Rule movement, Akali and the Temple Reform movements of the 1920s, the struggle in the legislature and in the Press, the working class struggles, the INA revolt, the rise of left inside and outside the congress were some of the movements that were launched to defy the British rule and atrocities and are the precursor to the Indian Independence movement for freedom from the clutches of the British conquest.

[3] Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his associates had virtually led the foundation for western education. He was in favour of a liberal and enlightened system of education. Mehra, *"Historical Development of the Party System in India"*, p.50.

[4] The nationalistic trend got accentuated by the British attempt to keep the Indian Civil Service as their preserve by imposing conditions on entry, the unpopular Afghan war of 1878-79, the 1878 Indian

British regime which ranged from indulging in repression, sending people and freedom fighters to prison, curbing newspaper with Press laws[5] for better control of publication of 'seditious' writings in vernacular language that would highlight the 'injustice and tyranny' of the British Raj, indiscriminate use of Police forces upon innocent masses, massacres, etc. and stood for a system that can represent the causes of the masses at large and hence this led to the emergence of a democratic political culture in the country that consequently led to the establishment of a formalized party system in the country.[6] The exploitative policies of the British regime favoured the growth of a group[7] which gradually evolved and took the shape of a political party in the country which was then under the atrocious rule of British imperialist forces. This party was known by the name of Indian National Congress (INC) that evolved as the greatest opponent of British imperialism and was then the most organized medium to express the aims and wills of the Indian people who were under the repressive colonial rule.

The Rise of Indian Party System

Allan O. Hume, an ex-official of Indian Civil Service, floated the idea of organizing an All-India party that would work for the material, moral, political advancement of the people in India. However, Lord Dufferin had asked Hume to form such an

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Arm's Act as a result of Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 that deprived Indians of the right to have arms in their possession, the Vernacular Press Act which gagged Indian newspapers, the famines of 1896, 1899, 1900 as well as Lord Curzon's cruel attempt to partition Bengal in 1905.

[5] The vernacular Press Act stated that (a). The magistrate may require the printer or publisher of any vernacular paper to enter into a bond not to print or publish anything likely to excite feelings of disaffection to the government or antipathy between persons of different race, castes, religion or sects. (b). If a newspaper contain matter of the description mentioned the local government may warn such newspaper and if the offence be repeated seize the plant of the newspaper and confiscate the money or securities deposited. (c). the publisher instead of making a deposit may undertake to submit proofs to a government officer and to publish nothing which such officer objects to. (d). no proceedings under the Act may be called into question by any court of civil or criminal jurisdiction. See Dacosta John, *"Remarks on the Vernacular Press Law Of India Or the Act IX of 1978"*, Bristol Selected Pamphlets, 1878. Also see Uma Dasgupta, *"The Indian Press 1870-1880: A Small World Of Journalism"*, Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1977, p.213.

[6] Congress was from the very beginning committed to the democratic ideology.

[7] A section resorted to moderate type of policies of prayer,petition and persuasion, affirming loyalty towards the imperial authority and demanding for petty reforms such as Indianization of the government services, Repeal of Arms Act, reduction in land revenue,etc. They did not ask for self-government and the other section was the one which followed aggressive nationalism (known as extremists and the most notable being Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal) and demanded nothing short of complete independence and this aggression saw the imperial authority left with no option but to quit India and liberate it.

organisation to discuss political matters by leading Indian politicians so that the British government could keep itself abreast of the growing Indian opinions and political developments (Chandra et.al., p-69, 1989)[8]. Hume joined the Theosophical society[9] in 1881. The Brahmo and Arya Samaj[10] tried in different ways through the western-educated Hindus to cleanse the Indian culture from its numerous dogmas and amalgate it with western education which was a new world of modern and progressive scientific, political and social ideas. However both of the movements were unsuccessful in stimulating the necessary zeal among the western-educated Indians to develop an organizational structure for political development. These movements were religious in nature with a hue of nationalism and were Hindu in nature too. Hence Muslims did not identify themselves with these movements and therefore it remained restricted in terms of its influence (Nehru, 2004, p.507). The Theosophical Society also attempted to synthesize Indian culture with western education and set asides the numerous dogmas that had crippled it and at the same time was able to assemble some of the prominent Europeans as well as western-educated Indians under one roof to create a pan-Indian organisation. It was able to bridge the religious and intellectual gulf separating Hindus, Buddhists, Parsees, Sikhs, Christians, and even some Muslims. The Theosophical Society brought together a remarkable group of Indians

[8] For Madame Blavatsky and her association with Hume *See* Bipan Chandra (et.al), *"India's Struggle For Independence"*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 1989, pp.65-70.

[9] From its inception, the Society aimed at bridging the gap between religion and modern science and free religion itself from "superstition" and "sectarianism". Theosophical society was founded in 1875 in New York by Col. Henry S. Olcott, a New England veteran of the U.S. Civil War, and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, a Russian emigree and cousin of Count Witte (Czar Nicholas II's great minister). The Theosophical Society developed out of the spiritualist movement in Europe and the United States. Initially concentrating on psychic phenomena or "scientific mysticism" as they called it, Theosophy claimed its roots in the Western occult tradition of neo-Platonism, the Kabbala, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry.

[10] Both started as reform movement to free Indian culture and religion from its evils, although retaining its indigeneous nature and refurbish it by synthesizing it with western education. British imperialism has handicapped indegeneous institutions, culture deformed Hindu religion. Rammohan and others tried to achieve a cultural synthesis, purify Hinduism and reform it to make with consistent with western science and technology to ensure development of the society on its own. Roy was one of the most important Hindu reformers of the early nineteenth century. Rammohun Roy took up the cause of Indian women in Bengal. He preached the abolition of sati and child marriage and he condemned the traditional bans on remarriage of widows. To carry out his program, in 1828 Roy founded the Brahmo Sabha in Calcutta. He wanted to reform Hinduism free it from numerous dogmas, restore the Vedic form. He preferred to see India retain its unique cultural identity. Like Roy, Debandrenath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshav Chandra Sen, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Dayananda Saraswati was the greatest Punjabi Hindu reformer of the nineteenth century. His goal too was to reform Hinduism through a return to the pure Aryan faith of the Vedas. He attacked idol worship, child marriage, traditional death rites and even food prohibitions.

and Europeans who eventually strove hard to launch the Indian National Congress, the first all-India nationalist political movement (Travis Hanes III, 1993, pp.-71-72).[11]

The Society provided the organizational catalyst necessary for an all-India political movement with its yearly conferences. At the 1884 Theosophical conference in Madras, Raghunath Rao, former diwan of Indore state, expressed his desire to use the annual "conventions" to discuss the political and social issues that was crippling the colonial Indian society. However, it is often argued that Hume had desired only to create an organisation that would discuss only social matters and not political issues that had crippled the then Indian society (Chandra et.al., 1989, p.69). However, Rao failed to receive support from Blavatsky, one of the founders of the society. Rao remained undwindled on his stand and convened a meeting in his own home of those Theosophists interested in political questions. Following the meeting, the local members decided to establish a new provincial society, Madras Mahajana Sabha, and chalked out a detailed program calling for the establishment of an all-India political organization. The Indian Association of Calcutta headed by Surendranath Banerjee under the influence of Narendranath Sen, proprietor of the *Indian Daily Mirror* and a leading Bengali Theosophist also decided to convene for an all India political conference in Calcutta in December. Clearly, despite Blavatsky's reluctance, the Theosophical Society had become a boiling pot for brainstorming discussion on various brewing political and social concerns of the then colonial Indian society. The Indian leaders used it to fulfil their aims for organizing their political agitation against the British Imperial authority.

The meeting at Raghunath Rao's house in Madras in December 1884 has been claimed by some scholars as the immediate predecessor of the Congress. Hume himself was not at this meeting. He was in Bombay working with western Indian leaders, particularly Dadabhai Naoroji and B. M. Malabari, toward the creation of what he hoped would be a truly national Indian political movement[12]. The immediate

[11]The second half of the 19th century saw the formation of many political associations due to rise of national consciousness. The Bengal India Association of Bengal, the Bombay Association and the Madras Native Association were some such associations that promoted Indian interest. Naoroji organized East India Association in 1886 to represent the grievances of the Indian people and seek remedy from the British administration. Similarly Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded by Justice Ranade to arouse public opinion. These associations were considered as fore runners of Indian National Congress.

[12] It is claimed that although Hume was chosen to pacify the Indian discontentment by creating a organisation for discussing social issues only but after his retirement from ICS service he has been

result was the creation of yet another provincial organization, the Bombay Presidency Association, which fell far short of his aspirations for an all-India organization. Undaunted, Hume continued to work throughout 1885, wooing his former Theosophist colleagues and friends around India, as well as other leaders among the western-educated Indian elite, to join in an all-India political conference to be held at Poona in December 1885. Hume, however, was heavily influenced by the Theosophical Society in his efforts to advance the cause of Indian nationalism, perhaps even more profoundly than his Indian colleagues in Madras and Calcutta[13]. Although the Poona arrangements had to be changed at the last minute due to an outbreak of cholera, Hume's Indian National Union based largely on the Bombay Presidency Association, later supported by the Madras and Poona groups, as well as others throughout the subcontinent finally convened in Bombay in December 1885, immediately renaming itself as the Indian National Congress. In 1886 the Congress convened in Calcutta, where it absorbed Banerjea's National Conference. Thus, largely through the medium of the Theosophical Society, the Indian National Congress became the all-India political expression of the western-educated Indian elite (Travis HanesIII, 1993, pp. 89-95)[14]. Hume received support from other nationalists such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tayabji, etc. Naoroji at the meeting in Bombay in 1885 suggested changing the name Indian National Union to Indian National Congress (INC). It was on 28th December 1885 when 72 gentleman representing 27 districts of British India met in the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College and Boarding House in Bombay (now Mumbai) to attend the inaugural session of the Indian National Union and this signalled the birth of a

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largely working in motivating indians to do something significant in resolving their political problem, the problem of being under a repressive foreign rule. *See* Bipan Chandra et.al *"India's Struggle for Independence"*, Penguin Books, 1989, p.67-70.

[13] According to Travis Hanes, Hume was fully prepared to believe that the Theosophical Society had been expressly created by the spiritual guides of humanity, the Mahatmas of the Himalayas, to forward the political aspirations of India. And so he set in motion plans that led to the creation of the Indian National Congress. Thus, the Theosophical Society became the seedbed for modern Indian political development. The connection lasted for some time. In 1917, for example, the president of the Theosophical Society, Annie Besant, an outspoken advocate of Indian nationalism as well as women's rights, was also elected president of the Indian National Congress; she later founded the Indian Home Rule League. As late as the 1920s, most leading advocates of political reform in India were also Theosophists. *See* "On the Origins of the Indian National Congress: A Case Study of Cross-Cultural Synthesis", W. Travis Hanes III, Journal of World History, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 94-96.

[14] Western-educated Indians came to regard themselves as the natural indigenous leaders and spokesmen of India because they had acquired knowledge and has become educated based on the British educational system. *See* W.Travis Hanes III, "On the Origins of the Indian National Congress: A Case Study of Cross-Cultural Synthesis", Journal of World History, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), p.73.

political party (Mehra, 2003, p.50). Thus, the foundation of Indian National Congress (INC) formally gave a quick start in the evolution of an organized medium to express resentment over the rule of an alien force over India. The birth of INC heralds a struggle for power between the British Imperial authority and the Indians and between the Hindus and the Muslims over the rate and method of transfer of power from British to the Indians. Hence, after the origin of INC a constellation of numerous other political parties came into being and this led to the genesis of the formation of a party system in the country within which they competed for power from time to time and shared intricate inter-relationships among themselves over sharing of power.[15] It played a key role sufficient to pressurize the British to quit India. The Mountbatten Plan stated that power would be handed over to successor government in India after its withdrawal on 15th August, 1947. Lord Mountbatten who was sent to India by Clement Attlee to negotiate and transfer power to Indians could not unite the then two major parties; Indian National Congress (INC) and the Muslim League and concluded that partition of the country was inevitable.

Hence after long years of continuous struggle freedom from colonial rule came to India but at the cost of the tragic partition–the division of British India into Pakistan and India. According to the two-nation theory, advanced by Muhammad Ali Jinnah of Muslim League India consisted of not one but two major communities, viz., Muslims and Hindus. That is why there should be a separate homeland for the Muslims.[16] Thus partition of the country took place. Pakistan was born. Partition was the consequence of the age-old rift between the Hindus and the Muslims and the failure to reconcile on how and to whom power would be transferred[17]. However, it is often stated that independence was largely due to the result of the mass action of 1946-47 in which many communists participated often as leaders. But the bourgeois leaders of the

[15] 'Political parties' are those which are engaged in a struggle for power and together they go onto form a "party system". Parties, according to Sartori, make for a "system" only when they are parts (in plural) and a party system is precisely the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition. That is, the system in question bears on the relatedness of parties to each other, on how each party is a function of the other parties and reacts competitively or otherwise to the other parties.

[16] Muhammed Iqbal, a Persian-Urdu poet and the founding father of Pakistan at the Presidential address delivered at the Muslim league session in Allahabad on 1930 profounded his theory for a separate homeland comprising of Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province into a separate state for the protection of Muslim cultural identity from the onslaughts of Hindu majoritarianism. His idea initially received less support but was later on realised by Jinnahwith the 1940 Lahore Declaration in the form of two-nation theory that proposed to form a Muslim state to protect theirpolitical and cultural aspirations.

[17] Partition led to unprecedented violence, trauma, tragic transfer of population, killing in the name of religion and various other atrocities became the order of the day.

Congress frightened by this revolutionary upsurge and of getting overpowered negotiated with the imperialist power by which power was transferred to them and the nation paid the price of partition (Chandra, 1989, p. 487). However, according to the Cambridge School of thought, it is believed that the British colonial elite had the aim to introduce the native population with the ethics of parliamentary democracy and hence gradually handed over power to them in subsequent doses (Bjorkert, 2006, p.41). Whatsoever may be the case, the massive mass agitation across the country made one thing evident that people of India would not settle for anything short of complete independence. Amidst such a situation the introduction of communal electorate gave birth to communal hatred between the two communities, Hindus and the Muslims and this steadily drifted them apart. Moreover the failure of the Coalitions Talks in U.P between the League and the Congress by 1938, the introduction of Wardha scheme of education, the use of Vande Mataram as a national song, the Mass contact movement launched by Congress in 1937, the reverence paid to Mahatma Gandhi, the emphasis on cow protection, etc. acted as further catalyst in setting the Muslim League apart from the Congress party.

In 1920 Jinnah left the Congress over various disagreements (mostly on policies) and soon became an important figure in the Muslim League. Jinnah was apprehensive about his prospects in free India. Nehru and Jinnah both were on a rat race for the post of Prime Minister in a free India. Though Gandhiji suggested offering the august post to Jinnah but Nehru and Patel disagreed eventually materializing the creation of Pakistan[18]. Thus, India and Pakistan was largely the outcome of power politics. As Jinnah wanted a separate country called Pakistan, [19]so power in India was transferred to an interim government composed mostly of Congress leaders. Congress was the representative of the masses and did not adhere to any particular communal ideology neither did it have any religious label attached to it like the Muslim League nor was the largest organization existing at the time of independence (Pandey, 1978, pp.631-637).

[18] Chaudhry Rahmat Ali proposed to create a sovereign independent state, naming it as Pakistan. *See* V.N Datta, "*Iqbal, Jinnah and India's Partition: An Intimate Relationship*", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.37, No.50, Dec.2002, p.5036.

[19] *See* R.J Moore, "*Jinnah and the Pakistan Demand*", Modern Asian Studies, Vol.17, No.4, 1983, pp.-529-561.

Multi-Party in origin

Indian population comprised of millions of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, the depressed classes and various other castes, religions, languages, etc. The heterogeneous and stratified nature of Indian society made the Indian political system diversified and hence the party system that it possessed was naturally multi-party in nature since its origin. Many political organizations existed to speak for these varied groups. The orthodox Hindus were represented by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Moderates by the Non-Party Conference, Dr. Ambedkar spoke for the depressed classes, the Muslims had several parties to represent them, the most vocal being the All India Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. In addition to it, there also existed Krishak Lok Party in Bengal, the Unionist Party in Madras, the Azad Independent Party in Sind, the leftist groups such as the Ahrars (a tenant- farmer organisation), the Communist Party of India formed in May 1920, The Radical Democratic Party of M.N. Roy, the Swaraj Party, the Congress Socialist party formed in 1934 with the demand for a more radical and egalitarian Congress which later on came out of Congress to form a separate party known as the Socialist party in 1948 (Kane, 1944, p.50-51). Socialist party in its later period went through many splits and reunions and formed many other parties such as the Kisan Mazdoor Party, The Praja Socialist party, Samyukta Socialist party, etc. Hence it can be stated that the Indian party system ever since the pre-independence period has been multi-party (a system that has more than two parties[20]) in nature because of the existence of varied political organizations. The Indian party system was a cooperative competitive party system where the other parties apart from Indian National Congress (INC) existed but played a less meaningful role in the system.[21]

[20] For Multi-party system *See* Maurice Duverger, "*Political Parties: Their organisation and Activity In Modern states*", 1963, pp.207-234.

[21] In terms of composition it can be described as multi-party in nature but structurally it was one–party pre-dominated system till 1967, remained bipolar till since 1977. Since 1980 till 1989 the one party predominated character was restored partially but since 1989 the coalitional feature has remained unaltered till date, though since 2004 the Congress party has regained the status of 'majority party' in a highly fragmented multi-party system.

Congress as the *Majority party*

Amongst these varied groups the strongest and the most representative was the Indian National Congress.[22] INC originated in 1885 as a pressure group for the newly educated, English speaking, professional and commercial classes dominated by upper caste Hindus, upper middle class and urban elite to a mass movement in the 20th century. With every civil disobedience movement its social base widened. It accommodated within it numerous groups of peasants, industrialists, urban dwellers, and dock and textile mill workers. Congress in its Lucknow session adopted a resolution that divulged its belief in not being a class organization. In the session it claimed that "it was a national organization having its member persons belonging to all classes and states of society" (Pandey 1978, p.633)[23]. In a resolution, adopted at the congress working committee meeting at Calcutta (now Kolkata), Congress expressed a similar opinion that the aim of the party was to achieve an independent and united India (Pandey, 1978, p.633). Upper, middle, lower classes and castes all found space in the Congress. Its leadership too expanded beyond the upper castes and class coalitions to agricultural based leaders, dock and mill based workers. Since its formation it has attempted to widen its base by taking within its fold diverse classes, groups, castes, religions, languages and various interests. Congress gradually got transformed into a social coalition consisting of different element united by common aims. This is how Congress party has tried to adopt a nationalistic base and outlook for itself unlike other than existing political parties. Hence it was able to surpass other political parties electorally.

Besides, in order to bring the Congress closer to the masses Hindustani language was adopted as the medium of language for the proceedings of the Congress sessions (Krishna, 1966 pp. 418-419).[24] Women in large numbers stepped out into the public

[22] Its attendence grew from seventy-two to six thousands delegates and had three and a half million dues paying memebers as well asthe samenumber of members who cannot pay but acted unofficially as party worklers suggested that its influence was far greater than its membership suggets. Albert E.Kane, "*The Development of Indian Politics"*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol.59, No.1, March 1944, p.50).

[23] However, according to Professor Coupland, the congress was a Hindu organisation. Its Muslim membership was small and comprised of few Muslims of outstanding ability and influence but its background, its modes thought, conduct were essentially Hindu in nature and not muslim- centric.

[24] In order to increase mass participation in the Congress activity it was decided to conduct the deliberations of the Provincial Congress Committee on the linguistic basis as it would draw people into the work of the Congress party. The provision was laid down in the 1920 constitution. The provincial

domain due to special appeal by Gandhiji and participated in the nationalist movement mostly through non-cooperation and Khilafat movement. They gradually became active members of the Congress and later on occupied important positions within the Congress.

With the adoption of secularism Congress made the stay of Muslims in India secure and comfortable. With the dismantling of the Muslim League after independence, Indian National Congress became the sole alternative for all those Muslims who stayed back in India after the historic and tragic partition. With the non-cooperation and Khilafat movement, the party started assuming the character of a mass organization. Through its mass movement from 1920 to 1945 it was able to build up an unbridled position for itself in the Indian subcontinent unlike the other political organizations.

Moreover, it had a well-knit organizational structure with district, town, taluka, 'firka' or circle and village units which were under the Provincial Congress Committee, a key part of Congress's structure. The Provincial Congress Committee conducted its deliberations in local languages to draw masses into its fold. At the apex existed the Working Committee, Pradesh Congress Committee, and All India Congress Committee to look after the day to day functions of the entire organization. The organizational structure of INC was well-knit and permeated at all level and this enabled Congress to chalk out some strategies, assimilate themselves and start campaigning well ahead of other political parties for the first general election for the democratic, independent, republican India. Congress maintained its popularity because it was perceived as the party which had brought India her independence. Hence its success can be attributed to the legacy of the freedom struggle. Moreover, some prominent leaders who were part of the freedom struggle were contesting elections as Congress candidates. Moreover, it drew its legitimacy as Chatterjee writes, "through the system of identification with a particular leadership, its agents and heirs" (Chatterjee, 2006, p.47). Even before other parties could chalk out some strategies and assimilate themselves, the Congress by then had already started campaigning. Coupled with it people had a special inclination towards the party as

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units were laid into 21 linguistically homogeneous provinces. Later on by the end of 1921 it was decided that some flexibility would be maintained and no imposition will be made upon the members of the various Congress organization to use Hindustani language for official deliberations. *See* Krishna, *'Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organisation, 1918-1923*', pp.415-419.

Gandhiji was associated with it. By 1935 Congress represented the politically conscious masses of India which was by then under the stewardship of Gandhiji and as says Ehrmann, was assisted by "the eloquence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the organizational ability of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel" that helped in building up a strong party machine in India (Ehrmann, 1947, p.669). Nehru was also a determining factor for the success of the Congress as he was adored by the masses and was perceived as the leader of the masses. Moreover, there had been no revolutionary changes in the economic system, the government through its community project works, land reform measures, dams and irrigation schemes had been able to successfully reach out to large number of masses. Adequate availability of food grains and no such shortages has helped in cementing the position of the Congress party. The ability of the Congress to keep divergent economic and social groups under one roof has been an added advantage for the Congress (Weiner, 1954, p.186). Moreover there existed conciliating relationship between the Congress party and other opposition parties. The opposition parties are said to have existed as parties of pressure but they played a less meaningful role in the system[25]. The inclusive character of the Congress party enabled it to attract different sections, groups and interest making it a broad based social and ideological centrist party. The Congress party had tolerated and accommodated various groups that mushroomed inside the party preventing the possibility of growth of any strong and powerful opposition parties. It was within the Congress where all the different groups and factions that could have exercised some influence or challenged the existence of Congress party were encompassed. This is how the INC occupied a very dominating position in the Indian politics and consequently in the Indian party system before and after independence. Congress had contested the election of 1936-37 so as to bring within its fold the administration partly so that the Congress can contribute towards the Indian causes which was not being protected and addressed by the exploitative British imperial authority. The Congress won majorities in eight of the eleven provinces and participated in coalition governments in the other three. It won 711 out of the total number of 1585 seats. The Muslim League contested for only 482 seats out of 1585 seats and won 108 seats. It did not get a majority in a single province not even in North West Frontier Province (NWFP),

[25] The Congress claimed that it represented all groups in India and was intolerant of opposition from any other political parties. Ehrmann, "*Post-War Government and Politics of India*", The Journal of Politics, Vol.9, No.4, Nov., 1947, p.669.

Sind, Punjab and Bengal. NWFP and Sind had Congress governments and the latter two had coalition ministries (Ehrmann, 1947, pp.669-670). The League with the election appeared weak in the Muslim majority province and could make little impact in Punjab, Bengal and Sind as well as in NWFP (Datta, 2002, p.5037). After the 1937 election Nehru infused with confidence due to better performance in the 1937 election landed up remarking that the Congress and the British Raj were the only two parties in India and immediately invited protest from Jinnah who claimed that the Muslim League was the third equal competitor (Moore, 1983, pp.533-534). Hence, although various political parties co-existed in 'different modes and forms' in the Indian party system but it was the Indian National Congress that was able to scale the ladder of prominence and dominance in the map of Indian politics as well as gradually emerge as the majority party in the Indian party system.

Therefore, after independence this very organization won the five parliamentary elections and enjoyed an unimpeachable hegemony, managed two successions, sustained the democracy in the country, undertook the process of developing the free India through planning and industrialization and took up the task of nation-building.

A Competitive Multi-Party System with Congress predominance as a majority party

The need to install the first democratically elected government cropped up. Till 1950 the country was ruled by an interim government.[26] Hence, ultimately the first general election was held from October 1951 to February 1952 with some 17 Crores eligible voters; out of which some 15 percent were literates. The Congress started with its preparations to fight the first general election. It had started campaigning for the election much ahead of any other parties. It was then already blessed with coherent, well knit organizations at all levels, whereas, the other parties were busy forming one. The party came forward with plethora of pledges and promises. Thrust was given on economic and social reorganization of the country which was already in a dilapidated condition because of its colonial past. The need of the hour had been to rewrite the

[26] On August 1946 the first interim goverment was formed with Nehru as its head, seven portfolios were given to Congress members, five to non- League Muslims, five portfolios to members of Muslim League (after much discussions and deliberations). *See* WinstonW.Ehrmann, "*Post-War Government and Politics of India*", The Journal of Politics, Vol.9, No.4, Nov. 1947, p.681.

fate of the rural population and improve the condition of the farmers or the agricultural labourers. The party sincerely had believed that industries of basic importance such as steel, heavy chemicals, fertilizers should be developed (Ralhan, 1998, pp.6223-6235).

The Congress party thus gave a call for a large unity of purpose, endeavour and cooperation and headed to contest the first ever Lok Sabha election of 1952. The INC won the first general election surpassing all the other parties. It won 364 of the 489 Lok Sabha seats, i. e; 75.99 percent of seats and 44.99 percent of votes. In comparison to it the Socialist Party, the largest opposition party could secure only 4.72 percent of seats and 10.59 percent of votes. Congress won a majority of seats in all the states except in Travancore, Cochin, Madras and Orissa. But later on it even formed government in these states (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In the State Election of 1951 to the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh, the Hindi speaking heartland of India, the INC contested 429 seats and won 388 seats and 47.93 percent of votes. In Bombay (now Mumbai) too it emerged victorious surpassing the other national parties and state-based parties. It won 269 seats out of 313 seats with 49.95 percent of votes whereas the Socialist Party could win only 9 seats out of 182 seats. In Madras, it could not secure a majority but surpassed the other parties and won 152 seats only out of 367 seats and 34.88 percent of votes. The Justice Party could win only one seat with 0.48 percent of votes. The Socialist Party could bag just 13 seats out of the 163 seats that it had contested polling 6.48 percent of votes making CPI the second highest with 62 seats out of the 131 seats. In Travancore–Cochin the INC performed fairly and secured 44 seats and of the 105 seats and secured 35.44 percent of the votes followed by the Socialist Party which secured 14.38 percent of votes and 11 of the 70 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In Punjab, INC had performed well by securing 96 seats out of 121 seats and 36.69 percent of votes. Shiromani Akali Dal won just 13 seats out of 48 seats with 12.44 percent of votes whereas socialist Party drew a blank. In Bengal, the state, which played an important role in the nationalist movement apart from other states such as Bombay, Madras etc. the INC bagged 150 out of the 236 seats with 38.82 percent of votes, followed by CPI which secured 28 seats out of 86 seats that it had contested for with 10.76 percent of votes. Socialist Party, in Bengal, too drew a blank (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The first general election and the Assembly Election of 1951 has shown that apart from achieving Independence India has also successfully conducted its first ever election and became evident that among the then existing political parties Congress was recognized as the party of the "masses" who reposed their absolute faith on it.

With the establishment of the first government in 1952 headed by INC India started adopting measures to rebuild the nation that was ravaged the ill effects of exploitative colonialist policies. Development of the country became the first concern of the government headed by INC as India was then hardly inflicted with economic crisis as a consequence of colonialisation. The position of the Congress in fact got consolidated and legitimized through its initiative to develop the nation through planning and guiding its growth so as to ensure welfare of the people. It undertook land reform measures and invested in the agricultural sector which was largely affected by the colonial policies and was destabilized by the process of partition. It, in fact, rapidly took up the task of industrialization to make the country self-reliant and free from the clutches of poverty (Chatterjee, 2006, p.12).

The 1st Congress led government successfully completed its full term. The country conducted its second general election in 1957. For the second Lok Sabha election it was seen that the Congress made some policy shifts in its course of action. It laid greater emphasis on industry. In the manifesto of 1957 the need for production of steel, setting up of iron and steel industries and machine-making industries was given utmost importance to facilitate rapid industrialization of India. The party had even pledged to fight poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity, communalism, unemployment (Ralhan, 1998, pp.6238-6254). In the second general election of 1957 the Congress emerged victorious and secured 75.71 percent of seats and 47.48 percent of votes. In comparison to it, the Praja Socialist Party could secure only 10 percent of votes. One major aberration was that the Congress had a major defeat in Kerala where the Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged victorious with 40.57% of seats and 35.28% of votes. CPI won 60 seats out of 100 seats that it had contested whereas Congress could secure only 43 seats out of the 124 contested seats

with 37.85% of votes. Kerala had a CPI led government for a brief period from 1957 to 1959 (https://www.eci.nic.in).[27]

In West Bengal it was the Congress which had won the state election of 1957 to the legislature Assembly with 152 seats out of 251 seats and 46.14% of votes, whereas CPI could just secure 46 seats and PSP 21 seats. In Uttar Pradesh too Congress emerged victorious. In Orissa the performance by the Congress party's was consistently not laudable because it could not secure majority in the legislative assembly election and could win only 56 seats out of 140 contested seats with 38.28% of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). However the state party, Ganatantra Parishad performed very well and was 5 seats behind congress by winning 51 seats out of 108 seats with 28.74% of votes. In Punjab too Congress emerged victorious with 120 seats out of 154 seats and 47.51% of votes, surpassing all the other parties. BJS could secure only 9 seats, CPI won only 6 seats and PSP could manage just one seat (https://www.eci.nic.in).

In Madras, too Congress emerged victorious but could not secure absolute majority. It bagged 151 seats out of 204 seats and secured 45.44% of votes. In Bombay the Congress could win 234 seats out of 396 contested seats with 48.66% of votes. However, the performance of the party in the state got deteriorated in terms of seats with the 1957 state election in comparison to 1951 state election when it acquired 269 seats. In Bihar too Congress emerged victorious with 42.09% of votes and won 210 seats out of 312 contested seats (https://www.eci.nic.in). In Assam too it was the Congress party which had emerged victorious. Hence Congress came to power both at the centre and state for consecutively two terms thereby establishing its complete monopoly over the party system. The Congress party was hence enjoying a smooth sail.

In the 3rd General Lok Sabha Election, 1962, Congress again emerged victorious. It won 361 seats out of the 488 seats and 44.72% of votes. CPI secured 29 seats out of 137 contested seats with 9.94% of votes. PSP could secure only 12 seats with no improvement in its prospects. Jana Sangh contested 196 seats but could bag just 14 seats with 6.44% of votes and 7.14% of seats. In the state election to the Legislative

[27] The CPI won 60 seats and had the support of five Independents. E.M.S Namboodiripad became the Chief Minister of the state .The state had a non – Congress government. In 1959 the communist government was dismissed by imposing Art.356 by the centre headed by a Congress ruled government.

Assembly of 1962 Congress could not secure majority in Andhra Pradesh but won the highest number of seats in comparison to other parties. It secured 177 seats out of 300 seats with 47.25% of votes. CPI secured 51 seats out of 136 seats with 19.53% of votes. PSP drew a blank along with Jana Sangh. In Bihar, too it could not secure majority of seats but won 185 seats out of 318 seats with 41.35% of votes. PSP secured 14.17% of votes and won 29 seats out of the 84 contested seats with 6.23% of votes. Jana Sangh secured only 2.77% of votes and could win only 3 seats (https://www.eci.nic.in).

In West Bengal, the INC maintained its dominance and secured only 157 seats out of the 252 contested seats with 47.29% of votes. The CPI won 50 seats out of 145 seats with 24.96% of votes. However Jana Sangh could not cast any impact and drew a blank whereas the PSP could secure just 5 seats out of the 87 contested. In Assam, the INC contested for 103 seats and won 79 seats with 48.25% of votes. The Jana Sangh, the Socialist Party and the CPI drew a blank. PSP could secure 6 seats out of a blank. PSP could secure 6 seats out of the 53 seats (https://www.eci.nic.in).

In Madras, the INC bagged 139 seats out of 206 seats with 46.16% of votes, DMK, the state party, won some forty seats with 27.10% of votes. Jana Sangh and the Praja Socialist Party could not win a single seat in the state election to the Legislative Assembly. However, the CPI was able to win just 2 seats out of the 68 seats that it had contested with 7.72% of votes. In Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India, the INC secured 36.33% of votes and won 249 seats out of 429 seats. CPI won 14 seats with 5.08% of votes. Jana Sangh won 49 seats with 16.46% of votes. PSP secured 11.58% of votes and 38 seats out of 288 seats. In Punjab too the INC surpassed all the other parties. Akali Dal could secure just 19 seats out of 46 seats with 11.87% of votes. However, the INC maintained its position and won 90 seats out of 154 seats and secured 43.72% of votes. The PSP could not manage a single seat in the 1962 state assembly election. The CPI won just 9 seats and BJS secured 8 seats (http://www.eci.nic).

It is very well discernible from the past three general and state elections that the Congress party had emerged as the ruling party or a majority party. It had consistently dominated the political scenario of the country. Although nine other parties such as Praja Socialist Party, Communist Parties, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, etc. had been recognized as national parties by the Election Commission but none had been able to

effectively challenge the dominant position of the Congress Party. None of the existing party was able to evolve as a possible strong "alternative" to Indian National Congress and this particular phenomenon facilitated the continuous rule of Indian National Congress (INC) mostly at the centre for some decade since independence. Congress remained as the only viable option and exercised a 'monopoly' in the Indian party system and this helped in its election as the ruling party for repetitive terms. The party system in terms of nature gradually got transformed from a co-operative multi-party system to a competitive multi-party system which structurally remained a one party predominated system at the central level.[28] However, it will not be very correct to term the party system as "Congress system"[29] because lot many states had in some instances elected non-congress governments. Although with some aberrations in strength and impact the Congress did rule in most of the states till 1967. In Travancore–Cochin, Madras and Orissa, Congress failed to win an absolute majority and came to power by forming coalition with other political players (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Jammu and Kashmir it was the National Conference which was the ruling party. In Kerala, too, the CPI-led government had come to power during the era of Congress dominance. With the 1960 assembly election in Kerala, INC could not bag majority of seats and formed the government in alliance with PSP and Muslim League. Nagaland too had a non-Congress government headed by Naga National Organization with its first assembly election after it became an independent state in 1963 (https://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it can be stated from the very beginning the party system was bifurcated into two levels, i.e.; the central and the state level. The Indian Party System as a whole is not uniform structurally, neither in terms of composition. Although scholars such as Rajni Kothari(1964,1974), Morris Jones (1967) and others have categorized the party as Congress-party dominated system, it cannot be accepted as true because since the first general election the party system was bifurcated into two levels and in some states Congress had failed to win a

[28] According to Sartori, a "predominant" system is one which is actualy a system characterised by the existence of '*more –than- one*' party system in which rotation does not occur in fact. It simply happens that the same party manages to win, over time, an absolute majority of seats (not necessarily of votes) in parliamnet. *See* Giovanni Sartori, "*Parties and Party Systems: A framework for Analysis",* 1976, pp.195-197.

[29] *See* Rajni Kothari, "*The Congress System in India",* Asian Survey, Vol.4, No. 12, December, 1964."*The Congress System Revisited: A Decennial Review*," Asian Survey XIV, 12, December 1974, pp. 1035-54. Morris-Jones identified the system as "one party dominance". *See* W.H. Morris-Jones, "*The Indian Congress Party: Dilemmas of Dominance,"* Modern Asian Studies, April 1967.

absolute majority. Infact, since 1967 there was breakdown in the so called Congress system and with the 1977 general election the fall of the so termed 'Congress System' (Kothari: 1964) became more pronounced. Congress was able to consolidate its position after independence by undertaking the process of developing the state, removing feudalism, reorganizing the state on the basis of linguistic principle as a part of the attempt to maintain unity amidst diversity. During the period of Congress rule measures were taken by it to protect the interests of the socially disadvantaged sections of the society and promote their welfare which made Congress popular among this section of the society. Congress also gradually absorbed the minorities, especially the Muslims within its fold. The minorities even ran for offices and contested elections under the aegis of the Congress party and naturally drew support from this section of the society too (Hasan, 2002, p.50).

Moreover, during the Nehruvian era the party could maintain its dominance due to the flexible relationship between the central leadership and the provincial party units. The recommendations of candidates for parliamentary or assembly seats by the provincial party units or other opinions was without hesitant accepted by the central leadership (Chatterjee, 2006, p.11). However, in due course of time this feature of the Congress party got altered as Nehru tried to retain more and more of power in his own hand. This intention got materialized through the "Kamraj Plan".[30] This drive had been taken to suppress the role played by the powerful Chief Ministers of some selected states.

Reasons for Congress Decline since the late 1960s:

The massive credibility and popularity of Indian National Congress suffered a decline. Nehru and his policies came under direct criticism and for the first time in sixteen yeas his government faced no-confidence motion in Parliament in 1962. Nehru's aura suffered an eclipse with the border war with China in 1962. It revealed the military unpreparedness of the country and its lacunae. It was a great humiliation for the

[30] The Kamraj Plan was adopted on 10th August 1963 by the AICC. The main crux of the plan was to secure the voluntary relinquishment of the ministerial post by the senior Congressmen to devote all their time to the organizational work of the party so that the organizational strength and cohesiveness can be maintained.The resignation of some 12 senior leaders were accepted which included Morarji Desai, Kamraj, Shastri, S.K Patil, Jagjivan Ram, B.Gopala Reddy and Dr. K.L Shrimali. See footnote Kothari, '*The Congress System in India'* in Zoya Hasan,'Parties and Party Politics In India', 2002, pp.52-53.

people of India. (Chatterjee, 2006, p.13). However, Nehruvian era came to an end with his death in May, 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri had a clear and a smooth succession and he continued as Prime Minister of India till 1966 when he suddenly expired on 10th January, 1966. Meanwhile numerous crises crept in to jeopardize the status of the Congress party as the majority party at the centre.

There was over emphasis on industrialization which led to the neglect of the agricultural sector and hence there was a setback in food grains production. Hence, the nation faced food crisis. During the period from 1965 to 1967 severe droughts occurred in many parts of India along with famine. Bihar was hardly hit by the food crisis. Moreover, rural poverty in general got increased. The underground Naga tribes and the Mizo National Front were creating disturbances. The demand for a separate Punjabi Suba state and devaluation of the Rupee announced on June 5th worsened the situations further (Kothari, 1967, pp.86-87). All these conditions destabilized the position of the Congress party which was in power at the centre during this period. It was losing its popularity among the agricultural farmers and the poor people. The Congress government in their attempt to solve the food crisis and to increase food grain production decided to provide high yielding variety seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. to the farmers at a subsidized rate. However, only the rich peasants and large landlords of some regions like Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh gained from it. This is what was popularly known as the 'Green Revolution'. This led to resentment among the poor peasants and increased polarization among regions. In addition to these there was some other problems as well which were coming up in the nation and made the position of the Congress party difficult for the 1967 polls. Kothari identifies some such problems such as "soaring prices, considerable hardships for the urban population, language riots in the south, decline in production activity all around, accentuation of factional rivalries within the Congress, conditions of deprivation all around the country, decline in communication between the congress party machine, managed largely by an ageing and complacent organizational leadership and the people which had begun to display a critical outlook to anyone who took them for granted" (Kothari, 1971, p.248).

Amidst such crises the country as well as the Congress Party again had to confront with the problem of political succession with the expiry of Shastri. Following this, as against Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, was elected as

the next Prime Minister of India. However, one thing needs to be mentioned at this juncture was that the third Congress led government was about to complete its tenure and the country was about to face its fourth general election of 1967. The developments as mentioned brought changes in the Indian party system at both the levels. All the above mentioned problems had already jeopardized the pre-dominant position[31] of the Congress in the country. Eventually one thing became evident that Congress may not repeat its past performances.

A Competitive Multi-Party System: Fragmented and Binodal since 1967

With the 1967 election Congress failed to win a majority in some nine states which included Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala.[32] Hence its undisputed monopoly over the party system suffered an eclipse. INC contested 516 seats and won 283 seats with 54.84% of seats and 40.78% of votes. Its vote's percentage dropped by some 5 percent and it secured lesser number of seats (there was a drop by some 30 percent). BJS secured 35 seats out of 249 contested seats with 9.31 percent of votes. CPI could bag just 23 seats out of 109 contested seats with 5.11 percent of votes. CPI (M) won just 19 seats out of the 59 contested seats with 5.11 percent of votes. CPI (M) was a breakaway group of CPI. It got divided for the CPI's reluctance to condemn the 1962 border war of China. PSP contested for 109 seats and won just 13 seats with 3.06 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). The fourth Lok Sabha and State Assembly polls in 1967 took place in the backdrop of severe popular discontent and polarization of political forces. Various parties organized themselves to protest against the rule of Congress. A wave of non-Congressism swept the country.[33]Various ideologically incongruent parties came together in some states to topple the hitherto hegemony of the Congress. Hence, the party system got divided between the Congress party and the non-Congress fronts. Thus, it led to the polarization of the party system when we saw that forces were

[31] For the definition of pre-dominant system See Giovanni Sartori, "*Parties and party systems: A framework for analysis",* 1976, pp.195-197.

[32]These states were able to produce "alternatives" for themselves hence was able to offer the voters to choose from the menu of choices.

[33] The Socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia coined the term non-Congressism and said that the Congress rule was undemocratic as well as against the interest of the people.

emerging to challenge the unimpeachable hegemony of the Congress. These forces grouped them into a coalitional force and were known as Samyukt Vidhayak Dal or SVD governments. These forces appeared to be effective and Congress lost majority in as many as nine states. In the state election of 1967 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, INC performed well. INC secured 165 seats out of 287 contested seats with 45.42 percent of votes. PSP drew a blank. BJS secured 3 seats. In Assam, INC contested for 120 seats and won 73 seats with 43.60 percent of votes. BJS and CPM drew a blank. The CPI managed some 7 seats and PSP secured 5 seats. In Maharashtra, INC secured 203 seats out of 270 contested seats with 47.03 percent of seats. The CPI (M) secured 1 seat, BJS managed to bag just 4 seats and the Peasants and Workers Party secured 19 seats out of 59 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). It needs to be mentioned that with the 1967 elections many non-Congress government were formed in various states which were a coalition of several parties but were ideologically different. The anti-Congress parties (which were born out of the anti-Congress wave in the country) chalked out some common programmes and united themselves with the aim to topple the Congress dominance. Bihar had a non-Congress government (the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal Government) which comprised of the SSP, Praja Socialist Party, the Jana Sangh the Jan Kranti Dal (JKD) and the CPI. In the State election to the Legislative Assembly Bihar INC secured 128 seats out of the 318 contested seats with 33.09 percent of votes whereas BJS secured only 26 seats, PSP got some 18 seats, SSP managed to secure 68 seats, JKD bagged just 13 seats and the CPI won 24 seats (http://www.eci.nic). SVD formed a coalition and secured majority in the assembly and Mahamaya Prasad Sinha of JKD became the first non-Congress Chief Minister of Bihar.

However, the case was altogether different in case of Madras (now Tamil Nadu). In Madras the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham, the state-based party, came to power in the state with absolute majority. Congress was just wiped out of the state's political scenario. In the State Election to the Legislative Assembly of Madras, 1967, DMK won 137 seats out of 174 contested seats with 40.69 percent of votes and 54.32 percent of seats whereas INC could manage just 51 seats out of the 232 contested seats (http://www.eci.nic). DMK became popular with its anti-Hindi, anti-North and

pro-Tamil campaigns in the state. The DMK protested against the forceful imposition of Hindi as the official language of the state by the centre[34].

Punjab too had a non-Congress government in the state. The Popular United Front formed the government which comprised of the Akali Dal (Sant group), the CPI (M), the CPI, the Jana Sangh, the Akali Dal (Master group), the SSP and the Republican Party (RPI). INC despite of securing the highest number of seats (48 seats with 37.45 percent of votes) could not manage to form the government. The coming together of all the other parties jeopardized the position of the Congress in the state. The Akali Dal (Sant and Master group) won 24 and 2 seats respectively. CPI secured 5 seats and CPM had to satisfy itself with just 3 seats. The Jana Sangh bagged 9 seats, the SSP had to settle down with just one seat and the RPI got 3 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

West Bengal too experienced a similar phenomenon when the two non-Congress fronts led by CPI (M) and the other by Bangla Congress came together to form the United Democratic Front consisting of fourteen parties and formed the non-Congress government in the state under the Chief Minister ship of Ajoy Mukherjee. In Kerala, a United Front ministry came to power. In Kerala INC could secure just 9 seats whereas CPI (M) won 52 seats, CPI won 19 seats, SSP secured 19 seats, Kerala Congress won 5 seats and the Muslim League captured 14 seats. In Orissa, the breakaway group of Congress called Jana Congress allied with Swatantra Party to form the government in the state. The former won 49 seats out of 101 seats with 22.58% of votes and the Jana Congress (JAC) won 26 seats out of 46 seats with 13.47% of votes. INC won 31 seats out of 141 seats with 30.66% of votes (https://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it failed to win a majority in the election. Hence 'coming together' of non-Congress parties invited discomfort for the Congress party. Moreover, defections became the major concern for the Congress party as it led to the downfall of its government in almost three states, namely, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.

In Haryana, the Congress had won an absolute majority in the elections. It won 48 seats out of 81 seats with 41.33% of votes. SSP, PSP, CPI, CPI (M) all drew a blank. BJS secured 21 seats and RPI won only 2 seats and the Swatantra Party secured just 3 seats (https://www.eci.nic.in). However the Congress government got defeated within a week after assuming the office as a large number of Congressmen left the party and

[34] The anti-Hindi agitation by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party (DMK was after the split in Dravida Kazhagam, DK) brought immense popularity to the party in the state.

joined the opposition. A United Front was formed which came to power replacing the Congress Government. In Haryana Gaya Lal, an MLA changed his party thrice in a fortnight from Congress to United Front, back to Congress and then within some hours back to United Front. The country saw the biggest mockery of politics by the politicians. This incidence gave birth to the expression *'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram'* to describe the phenomenon of defection.[35] Madhya Pradesh had to witness a similar situation. There was a case of defection. Vijay Raje Scindia, the Rajmata of Gwalior, had left the Congress party and joined the Jana Sangh. An SVD ministry consisting of Congress defectors, the Rajmata's group, the Jana Sangh, the SSP and the PSP conglomerated themselves to form a government. In Madhya Pradesh, the INC was way ahead of others with 167 seats out of the 296 seats that it had contested for and secured 40.60% of votes. BJS got 78 seats, and 28.28% of votes. PSP secured 9 seats. SSP secured 10 seats whereas CPI could win only a single seat. The Swatantra Party could win just 7 seats (https://www.eci.nic). Hence it was the defection by the Rajmata group that primarily led to the collapse of the Congress government in the state.

In Uttar Pradesh, too the Congress failed to win an absolute majority. An SVD Government under the Chief Minister ship of Charan Singh came to power. Moreover due to a friction between C.B. Gupta and Charan Singh the Congress Government in UP could not survive. The Governor asked C.B. Gupta to form the ministry but it could only continue for three weeks because Charan Singh along with his followers left Congress to join the opposition. Hence an SVD ministry headed by Charan Singh came to power in the state (Chatterjee, 2006, p.17). In Uttar Pradesh the INC contested 425 seats but could bag just 199 seats. Hence, it failed to win an absolute majority. BJS bagged 98 seats, SSP won 44 seats, CPI won 13 seats, Swatantra Party secured 12 seats, RPI could manage just 10 seats and the PSP won 11 seats. In Rajasthan Congress did not win a majority in the 1967 polls but formed a government with help from others. Besides, the INC formed government in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, and Tripura. In Tripura, it secured 27 seats out of 30 seats. The SSP and the BJS drew a blank. The CPI and the CPI (M) secured one seat and 2 seats respectively (https://www.eci.nic).

[35] Defection can be explained as a phenomenon whereby an elected representative leaves the party on whose symbol the representative was elected and join another party.

Hence the ability of the non-Congress parties to form electoral alliance has helped in assimilation of the non-Congress vote. The prevalent anti-Congress wave in the country led to the erosion of the hitherto hegemonic position of the Congress party and brought substantial realignments in the party system of the country at both the levels. The splintering of anti-Congress votes had kept the Congress in power since independence. Even in its heyday, the Congress Party failed to win a majority of votes at any election; in the three parliamentary elections of 1952, 1957 and I962 it could secure votes between 45 and 48 per cent of the total. According to Sartori, a party that cannot fetch more than 50% votes cannot be considered as a pre-dominant party.[36] It was a '**majority party**' among the other existing political parties in the party system because it possessed by itself more than half of the parliamentary seats (Duverger, 1969, p.307).

The 1967 elections showed that people of the country were much more interested in 'performance' and substantial socio-economic developments rather than on vague promises and manifestoes. A large chunk of the people such as the young and new voters, urban voters, highly educated, the white collar class, the skilled workers voted against the Congress. In 1967 even the Muslim voters deserted the Congress in large numbers along with the Harijans and the tribals (Kothari, 1971, pp.235, 237, 239, 241, 248). Despite of this the Congress was able to retain itself at the centre but with some changes in the federal structure of the country, as several states were now having non-Congress governments. The state specific condition influenced the voting pattern of the people. As in Tamil Nadu we saw the Congress was ousted from power and the DMK a state based party came to power on its own by winning a clear majority. The people of the state were antagonized due to the forceful imposition of Hindi as the official language upon the state by the centre.[37] In Bihar too the SVD formed government and Congress was ousted from power following the lack of development in the state. Hence performance became a significant criterion for coming to power. However, most of these non-Congress coalitions' governments in the state collapsed within a short period. They either lost majority or new ministry replaced them. In certain cases President's rule was imposed to paralyze the existing non-Congress

[36] *See* Giovanni Sartori, *"Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis",* Volume- I, 1976, pp.195-196.

[37] The anti-Hindi agitation by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party (DMK was after the split in Dravida Kazhagam, DK) brought immense popularity to the party in the state.

governments. This earmarks that the popularity and unimpeachable hegemony of INC suffered an eclipse.

Besides, the credibility of INC suffered a setback. Apart from the Congress debacles in various states, the Congress from within was highly fractured. It got crippled by factionalism. Quest for power by the party bosses, rivalry among the party comrades eroded the organizational cohesiveness in the structure. Moreover, the inability of the veteran leaders to control Mrs. Indira Gandhi and make her dance to their tunes created a grave environment within the Congress party. She had to face constant challenges to her leadership. Hence she resorted to centralization (concentration of power in her own hand). She decided to assert her position within the government and the party. This annoyed the veteran leaders of the Congress, generally labelled as the 'Syndicate' which included leaders like S. K. Patil, S. Nijalingappa, N. Sanjeeva Reddy and some other big and powerful men of Indian politics. Ultimately, this friction between the Syndicate and Indira Gandhi reached its zenith with the Presidential election in 1969 following the death of the then President Zakir Hussain. Both Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the Syndicate put forward their candidates. The Syndicate nominated the long time opponent of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, N. Sanjeeva Reddy, and the Speaker of Lok Sabha as the candidate for the forthcoming election (Hardgrave.Jr., 1970, p.257).

Mrs. Indira Gandhi too suggested the name of V.V. Giri, the then Vice President of India for the post. She also recommended the name of Jagjivan Ram. But the Congress parliamentary board nominated N. Sanjiva Reddy for the post. V.V. Giri then decided to contest the election as an independent candidate and appealed for a vote of conscience. Giri drew support for him through vigorous campaigning from Samyukta Socialist Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the Muslim League, the CPI and the CPI (M), and from the members of the United Front governments of Kerala and West Bengal. The Jana Sangh, the Swatantra Party and the Bhartiya Kranti Dal put forwarded the name of C.D. Deshmukh for the presidential post (Hardgrave, Jr., 1970, p.257). Nijalingappa the then Congress President issued a whip asking all the Congress MPs and the state legislative assemblies to vote for Sanjiva Reddy.The Prime Minister refused to issue a whip for Reddy and urged the members to go for a vote of conscience in the election. This move was immediately endorsed by a large

numbers of Congress MPs. Hence a tug of war had initiated following the Presidential election between the Syndicate and Mrs. Indira Gandhi.[38]

The election result was in favour of V.V. Giri. With the defeat of the official candidate the split in the Congress became inevitable. By November 1967 the split got formalized, leading to the division of the Congress into Congress (Organisation) led by the Syndicate and Congress (Requisitionists) led by Indira Gandhi. Gandhi declared that it was an ideological split between the socialists and the conservatives, between the pro-poor and the pro-rich. The following events weakened the stature and strength of the party in the country. Mrs. Indira Gandhi in order to regain her lost grounds and consolidate her position as well as the party's position she adopted some pro-people policies. She adopted a Ten point programme which included social control of banks, nationalization of General Insurance, restriction of monopolies, move for immediate land reform measures, ceiling on urban property and income, public distribution of food grains, provision of housing sites for rural poor, abolition of privy purse, ceiling on rural holding, removal of disparities in income and opportunities, emphasized on growth of public sector and such various other populist provisions and programmes. She tried to widen her support base among the poor, the disadvantaged sections of the society, the landless labourers, with her famous slogan *"Garibi Hatao"* (Remove poverty). This gave her instant popularity and enabled her to acquire a nationwide political support base. The Syndicate had reservations towards these policies of Congress because it symbolized a change in the orientation of the Congress (Chatterjee, 1998, pp. 18-23).

With the split Mrs. Gandhi's government got reduced to a minority government after sixty two Congress members withdrew support and joined the opposition. But Mrs. Gandhi continued in office with the support of the DMK, the CPI, the Akali Dal, the Muslim League and the independents. In December 1970, Mrs. Indira Gandhi decided to dissolve the Parliament before the completion of its full term. She recommended for fresh elections. The congress promised to advance in the path of socialism through democratic process and curb violence and disorder with heavy hands.

The Fifth General Election to the Lok Sabha was held in February, 1971. This election saw Congress (organization) and Congress (requisionists) confronting each

[38] Jagjivan Ram, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, the Communists, the other Left parties, the DMK, the Muslim League and the Akalis all had supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

other. A Grand Alliance was formed between the SSP, PSP, Bharatiya Jana Sanga, Swatantra Party, Bharatiya Kranti Dal; Congress (R) forged an alliance with CPI. By the 1971 election several equally influential political parties were a significant part of the race for political power. Several parties were seen to have formed coalitions to compete with the Congress party. By then the Congress had got divided between Congress (Organization) led by the veteran leaders, the syndicate and the Congress (Requisitionist) led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. These two parties were seen to be at two different poles competing to have control over the reign of power leading to bipolarization of the party system. Hence by the eve of the 4th Lok Sabha election the Indian Party system got transformed into a fragmented bi-polarized multi-party system.

The election saw INC securing 352 seats out of 441 seats (79.82 percent of seats) polling 43.68 percent of votes. CPI, its ally won 23 seats out of 87 seats polling 4.73 percent of votes. The Indian National Congress (Organisation), NCO secured 16 seats out of 238 seats with 10.43 percent of votes. BJS secured 22 seats out of 157 seats with 7.35 percent of votes. CPI (M) won 25 seats out of 85 seats polling 5.12 percent of votes. PSP secured only 2 seats polling 1.04 percent of votes. SSP managed to acquire only 3 seats. SWA won 8 seats only. The Grand Alliance together could bag less than 40 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The Congress (R) won the election and restored back its dominant position in Indian party system and emerged as the real Congress with the support of such huge mandate. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was able to regain back the popularity of Congress. It adopted every measure to win the 1971 election and unleashed several popular programmes (as discussed in the earlier paragraphs) to woo the heart of millions of Indians, especially the rural poor. Indira Gandhi succeeded Jawaharlal Nehru after his death in 1964 and altered the democratically maintained coalitional structure of the Indian National Congress and personalized it by usurping all the powers in her hand. She suspended organizational elections, she, thus, became an unpopular leader among a large chunk of Congress cadres. To combat the anti-Congress wave in the country she adopted populism as her policy for survival and added socialism as a significant feature of the party's ideology. She gave the famous slogan 'Garibi Hatao' (Remove poverty) to win the hearts of the millions of deprived Indians. Due to lack of any established political culture and a defined party system, 'performance' became the

sole barometer to sustain oneself into power. Hence the Congress (R) came up with lofty promises and packages. The strategy did wonders and Congress (R) swept the Lok Sabha polls and emerged as the real Congress backed by the mandate of the people of India. Congress (R) secured 352 of the 441 seats polling 43.68 percent of votes and 79.82 percent of seats. Hence its tally of seats again got increased by the same 24.98 percent and share of votes got better by some 3 percent (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence, Indira led Congress restored back itself to the position of the majority party in the Indian multi-party system but with a decline in institutionalized politics and demise of mediated politics. Her party swept all the state Assembly polls in 1972. But certainly the spell of Congress had subsided in the country. The trump card of 'populism' and the ideologically incongruent unappealing oppositions actually favoured the electoral fortunes of the Congress (R). If the 1967 election jeopardized the position of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as a leader, 1971 election was able to re-establish her dominance.

Indira Gandhi began to lose her credibility and popularity from 1973 onwards due to nation-wide spread of droughts and some other serious challenges. Although the 1971 Indo-Pak War which led to the creation of Bangladesh gave Mrs. Indira Gandhi a stature of a national leader due to the humanitarian intervention by India during the period of crisis in Bangladesh but it enormously strained the India's economy. The economy toiled through the effects of inflation. Prices of all commodities increased manifold. Oil prices shoot up following the Arab-Israel War in 1973. Hence there was an international oil crisis. The economy got engulfed with the after effects of inflation which caused hardships to the people. There was decline in industrial growth and agricultural productivity, along with reduced employment opportunities. With the deteriorating economic situation sporadic discontent erupted in several parts of the country and eventually took the form of movement (Chatterjee, 1998, p. 24).

The country witnessed Naxalite upsurge in various parts of the country organized mostly by poor peasants and the landless who were grossly deprived of their legitimate claims and rights and were oppressed by the feudal lords. The Naxalite movement have had spread almost throughout the country but was most prominent in

the state of West Bengal (in the Naxalbari area of Darjeeling District), Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab.[39]

The country also witnessed movements organized by the students in protest against corruption in the government, rising prices of food grains, cooking oil and other essential commodities, food scarcity, unemployment etc. Under the leadership of Jay Prakash Narayan these students movement, which were mostly intense in Bihar and Gujarat, gained rigorous momentum and assumed a national stature.[40] The movement demanded dismissal of the government at the centre led by the Congress. Besides, there was a nationwide strike by Indian Railway and its workers in 1974, paralyzing the entire nation (Chatterjee, 1998, pp. 24-25).[41]

The climax to the entire episode was drawn by the judgement given by the Allahabad High Court in June 1975 which found Mrs. Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractices[42]. She was said to have used the service of the government servants in her election campaign. The judgment made her ineligible to remain M.P. any longer. This jeopardized her position as the Prime Minister of the country, until re-elected as a Member of Parliament and led to renewed agitation by the opposition parties. They demanded resignation of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. There was massive upheaval and demonstration against the Congress nationwide. The government at the centre repressed these upheavals by declaring a state of Emergency under Article 356 on 25th June 1975. Before the dawn of 26th June, 1975 the Chief opponents were put behind the bars. By using powers bestowed on the government under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act of 1971 (the notorious MISA), the Defence of India Rules, and other emergency measures, she ordered the arrest of several opposition leaders such

[39] The naxalites used to forcefully take away lands from the rich landlords and gave it to the poor and the landless.

[40] These movements were non-violent in nature and had assumed a political character.

[41] The National Coordination Committee for Railway men's Struggle led by George Fernandes gave a call for nationwide strike by all employees of the Railways for pressing their demand related to bonus and service conditions.

[42] Mrs. Indira Gandhi's defeated opponent, Raj Narain of the Samyukta Socialist Party in 1971 filed a case against her and charged her of numerous corrupt electoral malpractices in her campaign for election to Parliament from the Rae Bareilly constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Mrs. Gandhi testified for two days before Justice Jag Mohan Lal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court, the presiding judge in the case. And on June 12, in a ruling that startled the nation and threatened to drive Mrs. Gandhi from office, Justice Sinha found Mrs. Gandhi guilty of two rather minor charges, which nevertheless, according to the Representation of the People Act of 1951, were "corrupt electoral practices. 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.

as J.P Narayan, Morarji Desai, Asoka Mehta, Raj Narain, Piloo Mody, and Jyotirmoy Basu. The government resorted to press censorship. Within those thirty-six hours India changed from quasi-democracy to quasi-dictatorship. Fundamental Rights of the citizens got suspended; all agitations and demonstrations got curtailed. She told that these measures were important because this would "restore calmness, stability and a climate of trust" (Morris–Jones, 1975, p.453). The Indira Gandhi government committed various other 'excesses' which earned it massive resentment and unpopularity among the people of the country.

The Congress in order to stabilize their precarious conditions decided to unleash a social and economic programme through democratic processes. By implementing the twenty point programme it attempted to create its base among the hitherto neglected sections of the society. The Twenty Point Programmes included:

1) Continuance of steps to bring down prices of essential commodities. Streamlined production, procurement and distribution of essential commodities. Strict economy in government expenditure.

2) Implementation of agricultural land ceiling and distribution of surplus land and compilation of land records. Special care will be taken to ensure that tribal people are not deprived of their lands.

3) Stepping up of provision for providing housing sites for landless and weaker sections in rural areas.

4) Bonded labour, wherever it exists, will be declared illegal.

5) Initiative will be taken for liquidation of rural indebtedness.

6) Review of laws on minimum agricultural wages and suitable enhancement of minimum wages, wherever necessary.

7) Provision of drinking water especially in drought prone areas, provision for better irrigational facilities. National programme to be undertaken for use of underground water.

8) Super thermal stations to be brought under central control. An accelerated power programme would be undertaken.

9) New plans would be undertaken for development of the handloom sector.

10) Improvement in quality and supply of peoples' cloth should be undertaken.

11) Socialization of urban land. Ceiling on ownership and possession of vacant land.

12) Special squads for valuation of conspicuous construction and prevention of tax evasion. Summary trials and deterrent punishment for economic offenders.

13) Special legislation for confiscation of smugglers properties.

14) Liberalization of investment procedures. Action against misuse of import licenses.

15) New schemes for workers participation in industries.

16) National permit scheme for road transport.

17) Income tax relief to middle class – exemption limit rose to Rs.8, 000.

18) Essential commodities of controlled prices to students in hostels.

19) Books and stationary at controlled prices to students; banks to be established.

20) New apprenticeship scheme to enlarge employment and training (Morris-Jones, 1975, p.454).

These programmes were basically designed for the different sections of the society and to legitimize her step of imposing emergency. In addition to it the Congress (I) had declared some other packages to woo the sentiments of the people. The Congress had tried its best to retain its base by promising to continue with its policies of socialism and to safeguard the interests of the weaker sections and the minorities of the society.

Although under the Congress regime, the nation was able to witness large-scale nationalization of banks and other public sector organizations, abolishing of the privy purse, faced the Bangladesh crises of 1971 boldly, gave assistance and required support to the millions affected by the droughts of 1972-73 to a great extent, carried out peaceful nuclear explosion at Pokhran in May 1974, adopted stern measures to control inflation, go ahead with its 20 point programme which provided solace to millions of people, entered the field of space technology by launching Aryabhatta in earth orbit in April, 1975 but nothing could contend the ire of the people which got ignited with the 'excesses' committed by the emergency of 1975 (Paul, 1977, pp.101-115).

Meanwhile, the opposition parties had assembled themselves all the more coherently under the banner of the Janata Party with the slogan of "Save Democracy". The Janata Party was formed of Congress (O), Jana Sangh, the Swatantra Party, Bharatiya Lok Dal and the Socialist Party (Joshi- Desai, 1978, P.1104).

In January 1977 the government announced its intention to hold the elections in March, 1977. The result of the election was historic. For the first time since independence, the Congress was ousted from power. It got defeated in the Lok Sabha Elections of 1977. The result of 1977 election was the manifestation of people's discontentment and sufferings during the emergency period of 1975-1977. The Janata Party emerged victorious. The Janata Party and its allies bagged 330 seats out of 542 seats in the Lok Sabha election. Hence, they secured a clear majority. The Congress could win only 154 seats out of 492 seats polling just 31.30 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The Janata victory both in the parliamentary and state Assembly elections seemed to mark the end of the pre-dominant party system[43]. Janata's successes and Congresses' reduced but substantial strength had brought two national contenders for power viz; INC and a group of non- Congress parties who went onto form a new party, Janata Party into the forefront of the Indian Party system, hence transforming it into a competitive bi-party system (it became binodal structurally but remained multi-party in nature). The party system was never uniform structurally and since 1977 election it acquired a binodal feature even at the central level which since 1952 was predominant system.

The Janata Party emerged victorious in the state of Uttar Pradesh with 352 seats polling 47.76 percent of votes, whereas INC could secure just 47 seats out of the 395 seats that it had contested for polling 31.94 percent of votes. The Janata Party even managed to capture the state of Bihar by occupying 214 seats out of the 311 seats that it had contested for polling 42.68 percent of votes. However, INC could secure just 57 seats out of the 286 seats, polling 23.58 percent of votes. The Janata Party could even manage to win in the State of Rajasthan by winning 152 seats with 50.39 percent of votes. INC could manage to win just 41 seats out of the 186 seats that it had contested for with 31.49 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in).

[43] For "pre-dominant party system" definition *See* Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, 1969.

Janata Party even swept the Assembly Elections to the State of Madhya Pradesh by securing 230 seats out of the 319 seats with 47.28 percent of votes. The INC could bag just 84 seats out of the 320 seats, polling 35.88 percent of votes. In the State of Orissa the Janata Party won 110 seats out of the 147 seats with 49.17 percent of votes. Whereas INC could win just 26 seats out of the 146 seats that it had contested for with 31.02 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in).

In the state of Assam Janata Party swept the polls by winning 53 seats whereas INC could secure just 26 seats and INC (I) 26 seats. In Delhi, too Janata Party emerged victorious by winning 46 of the 56 seats, polling 52.58 percent of votes, whereas the INC could win just 10 seats out of 52 seats that it had contested for (www.eci.nic.in).

However, in the state of Andhra Pradesh it was the INC (I) which emerged victorious with 175 seats out of the 290 seats polling 39.25 percent of votes. The Janata Party could win just 60 seats and INC could manage to get just 30 seats only. In Karnataka too INC (I) emerged victorious with 149 seats with 44.25 percent of votes. Janata Party could manage to win just 59 seats with 37.95 percent of votes whereas INC could win just 2 seats, polling 7.99 percent of votes. In Kerala too it was the INC which emerged victorious with 38 seats out of the 54 seats that it had contested for with 20.02 percent of votes. CPI and the CPI (M) could win 23 seats and 17 seats respectively. In Tamil Nadu it was the DMK which left its mark with 48 seats out of the 230 seats, polling 24.89 percent of votes whereas the Janata Party could win just 10 seats and INC could win just 27 seats only. In West Bengal the CPI (M) could win the state Assembly election with 178 seats out of 224 seats with 35.46 percent of votes. Janata Party and the INC could manage to get just 29 seats and 20 seats respectively (www.eci.nic.in).

Actually the verdict of 1977 election was less in favour for Janata Party or its leadership, ideology or policies than in protest against the authoritarianism of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the emergency of 1975. However, the Janata Government could not live up to the expectations of the people. Although it had tried to implement a different developmental strategy designed on the basis of Gandhian strategy, emphasized on the development and growth of the rural areas and articulated its

intention of giving incentives to the farmers and small manufacturers but actually could not adhere to any of its promises and implement them.[44]

The Janata government after assuming power soon fell into crisis got crippled with dissensions and squabbles on various issues. The Janata Party faced its biggest challenge when the party was confronted with the challenge to elect the Prime Minister. Jagjivan Ram of Congress for Democracy, Charan Singh of Bharatiya Lok Dal and Morarji Desai of Congress (O) were serious contenders for the post. But when Morarji Desai was elected as the Prime Minister the other two felt left out and serious friction started within the Janata Government. Besides, distribution of tickets for State Assembly seats aggravated the problem. Even Raj Narain and Charan Singh aspired to become the Prime Minister of the country. Later on Raj Narain deserted the Janata Party due to the latter's association with RSS and formed Janata Secular. The Congress (Indira) emerged victorious in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in the Assembly Election in February, 1978. Janata experiment proved to be a failure because it lacked a defined leadership, coherent policies and a single ideology (Frankel, 1990, p.531). Janata Party lacked a clear vision on governance. It was mainly a manifestation of desire for power by few prominent leaders. It was the personal ambition and self-interest of the leaders that has crumbled the conglomeration of all these non-Congress parties.

The climax was drawn and the fate of Janata government got sealed when allegations of corruption were labelled against Kranti Desai, son of Prime Minister, Morarji Desai. The Congress (I) was most critical and vociferous about this matter. In July 1979, a no-confidence motion was brought against the government by Y.V. Chavan of the Congress, accompanied by series of resignations from the ruling ministry and defections from the ruling party. Morarji Desai too had resigned.

Charan Singh along with a group of defectors from the Janata Party and in coalition with the Congress formed a new government. It had the support of the Congress-I and the Left parties. However, the Congress-I withdrew their support from the new government compelling Charan Singh to resign on 20th August 1979. On 22nd August

[44] A rapid upside down change in the emergency regime ,the reinstitution of the rule of law and the dismantling of the structures of authoritarian control established by the Congress party were probably the most impressive accomplishment of the Janata party. Das Gupta, *"The Janata phase: Reorganization and Redirection in Indian Politics"*, 1979, p.395.

1979, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and ordered fresh elections. Until then Charan Singh's government continued as a caretaker government.

Partial restoration of Congress as the majority party in a fragmented multi-party system

In the elections held in January 1980, the Congress (I) led by Indira Gandhi emerged victorious to constitute the seventh Lok Sabha with her slogan of "the government that works". An appeal was made to elect a government which is progressive, secular and democratic. The INC in its election manifesto for the mid-term poll of 1980 clearly outlined the much needed and the radical reformist policies to renew the system. It accorded the highest priority to revive the Indian economy which was in doldrums due to poor management by the former Janata Government and was crippled with poverty and unemployment. Therefore, the Congress made an appeal to the farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, intelligentsia and the public sector and government employees to extend their hand of co-operation. The Congress also reaffirmed to reset the trend of vast investment in the public sector and revive the sector which has suffered some reverses in the past. It also committed itself to restore the confidence and faith of the people in the public sector. It had also declared that the Congress was in the position to continue, expand and intensify the various schemes for widespread employment opportunities, such as the rural employment programme, small farmer's development guarantee scheme, to provide employment and income opportunities to landless agricultural labour and small and marginal farmers. For fighting poverty, the Congress in its manifesto decided to effectively fight poverty through a scheme of guaranteed employment.

However, it expressed its intention of modernizing agriculture along with structural reform in the ownership of land and in the operational holdings. Congress had also promised to undertake a comprehensive programme to increase employment and income of small and marginal farmers and landless labourers. Congress also assured to protect the rights and aspirations of the working classes. Workers will be ensured with opportunities to participate in management of the industries and participate in the ownership of industry. Congress had again reaffirmed its intention to provide better and quality health, education, housing, nutrition, supply and sanitation facilities.

Drastic step was proposed to be taken to prevent child labour. Congress in the manifesto of 1980 expressed its concern to deal with local needs and requirement and therefore had proposed for an administrative set up suited to the needs of development at the grass root level in the rural areas. Congress also assured to maintain its laudable record of maintaining law and order in the country for over three decades in an efficient way. It sought to redress the fiscal system by revamping direct and indirect tax structure, curb wasteful expenditure, encourage savings and discourage evasion of tax.

The Congress during the emergency period distorted the freedom of the press but in the manifesto of 1980 pledged to safeguard the freedom of the press and encouraged the press to have its own regulatory measures and code of conduct. Special programmes will be undertaken to uplift the social and economic position of the people. Minorities were assured with provisions to preserve their autonomous character. The Congress had promised to take adequate steps to protect the interest of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and adopts measures to ensure their economic upliftment. Women were assured of opportunities for enhanced participation in economic, political, administrative system of the country. Elimination of corruption at all levels and achieving a clear and efficient administration were some of its other promises which the party had vowed to provide to its people. The party had also promised to take up requisite steps to protect the environment and develop and maintain friendly relations with other nations (Zaidi, 1980, pp.242-256).

Hence with all its promises the Congress (I) contested the 1980 Lok Sabha election. Congress (I) of Mrs. Indira Gandhi came back to power by securing 353 seats out of the 492 seats that it had contested for polling 42.69 percent of votes as compared to the 352 seats and nearly 44 percent of popular votes in 1971. Whereas the Janata Party (JNP) could bag only 31 seats and Janata Party (Secular) could secure just 41 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress swept the assembly election in Andhra Pradesh by securing 60 seats whereas JNP could secure just 1 seat. Congress even won in the election to the state legislative Assembly of Bihar by winning 169 seats out of the 311 seats that it had contested for, polling 34.20 percent of votes. JNP drew a blank and BJP could win just 21 seats polling 8.41 percent of votes. Even in Maharashtra the INC (I) won the state Assembly election by securing 186 seats out of 286 seats with44.50 percent of votes. In the state of Rajasthan too the INC (I)

emerged victorious and won 133 seats polling 42.96 percent of votes. BJP could secure 32 seats with 18.60 percent of votes. The Janata Party (JP) could manage to win just 8 seats and JNP (SC) won 7 seats and JNP (SR) drew a blank. The congress was able to win from Uttar Pradesh as well by bagging 309 seats out of 424 seats with 37.65 percent of the popular votes. BJP could win just 11 seats and Janata Party drew a blank (https://www.eci.nic.in)

In West Bengal, INC (I) of Mrs. Indira Gandhi could not renew its performance. It was the CPI (M) which continued with its dominance in the state with 174 seats and 38.49 percent of popular votes. Whereas the INC could win just 49 seats polling 35.73 percent of votes. In the state of Tamil Nadu too it was the ADMK which swept the assembly election by securing 129 seats with 38.75 percent of votes. DMK and INC (I) was able to win 37 and 31 seats respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in).

With the 1980 Lok Sabha election it was seen that the party system was entering into another phase where the dominance by the Congress party was not overwhelming. There was a tendency towards accentuated federalized multi-party system as in many of states non-Congress parties were coming to power. Hence there was a nominal restoration of pre- dominant party system with the 1980 general elections.

The restoration was not all inclusive as there was erosion in the support base in the Hindi heartland. Many regional parties had emerged. Tamil Nadu and Kerala favoured regional parties. Despite of it, the Congress (I) came to power at the centre under the Prime Ministership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The central mode of governance was centralization and 'control' of powers in the hands of few. The Congress (I) government deviated from the adopted path of development and on the contrary encouraged freeing of private sector from the regulation of the Central Government and also favoured liberalization.

In the meantime it was seen that in many of the states non-Congress governments came to power. The principle of federalism, as alleged, was getting violated due to the acting of the central government in an authoritarian manner. Gradually, this led to a growing sense of regionalism and demand for separate states gained momentum in many of the states during this period. In the North- East[45] such as in Nagaland and

[45] At the time of Independence the entire North- East region except Manipur and Tripura comprised of Assam. The reorganisation of Assam was completed by 1972. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were carved out of Assam.

Mizoram there was resentment over the rule of Congress and new regional parties came to power. Regional opposition took the form of insurgencies in many of the states such as in Assam and in Punjab. In Punjab the extremist wing of Akali Dal demanded a sovereign state of Khalistan.

However, amidst all these tensions Mrs. Indira Gandhi remained committed to the principle of socialism and announced a new twenty point programme which constituted the core of the Sixth Five Year Plan on 14th January, 1982. It included measures to expand irrigational potential of rural areas, rehabilitate bonded labour, supply of drinking water to all villages, expansion of public distribution system through more fair price shops, spread universal elementary education for the age group of 6-14 with emphasis on girl child, and such various other means so as to ensure social justice with equity. With these twenty point programme she forged ahead with her government with a vow of not to pause at any time or in any situation.

However, the rule of Indira Gandhi came to an abrupt end with her assassination in October 31st, 1984. She was killed by her own Sikh Bodyguards in retaliation for the attack on Golden Temple under the name of Operation Blue Star. Indian Army had entered the Golden Temple in Amritsar and fought a battle with some secessionists, captured a number of them and occupied large piles of arms and ammunitions. Large number of people died in this attack and it had hurt the religious sentiments of the Sikhs. Following her assassination riots broke out in several parts of the country (Bryjak, 1985, p.32). Amidst so much of tensions the country was due to face its eighth general elections.

In December 1984 the Eighth General elections took place. The mandate went in favour of the Congress (I) and was against all disruptive forces which threatened integrity, peace, unity and progress of the country. Rajiv Gandhi, son of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was elected as the Prime Ministerial candidate on the advice of some senior Congress leaders. Congress (I) won the 1984 election with an overwhelming majority of 404 seats, polling 49.10 percent of votes. BJP could win just 2 seats and Janata Party could bag just 10 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In the State Assembly Election of 1985 to the state of Arunachal Pradesh the INC emerged victorious with 21 seats polling 43.07 percent of votes. JNP drew a blank. In Assam too the INC emerged victorious with 25 seats and 23.23 percent of the popular

votes. JNP and the BJP drew a blank and the CPI (M) could win just two seats. In Bihar the INC could win 196 seats out of 323 seats with 39.30 percent of votes in the State Assembly election of 1985. In Gujarat too it was INC which won in the Assembly election by winning 149 seats out of the 182 seats that it had contested for, polling 55.55 percent of votes. BJP could win just 11 seats and JNP bagged 14 seats (https://www.eci.nic.in). In Uttar Pradesh, the INC was able to retain its base with 269 seats and 39.25 percent of the popular votes. BJP secured only 16 seats and the Janata Party could win just 20 seats. In Rajasthan too the INC was able to perform well and won the assembly polls of 1985. It won 113 seats out of the 199 seats that it had contested for polling 46.57 percent of votes. BJP secured 39 seats and JNP bagged just 10 seats. Even Madhya Pradesh INC did well and secured 48.87 percent of votes with 250 seats. In Maharashtra, INC emerged victorious in the 1985 assembly polls with 43.41 percent of votes and 161 seats out of the 287 seats that it had contested for (https://www.eci.nic.in).

However it was seen that in many of the States the Congress was not able to retain its bases. In the 1985 State Assembly Election to the State of Andhra Pradesh it was the Telegu Desam Party (TDP) which had emerged victorious with 202 seats with 46.21 percent of popular votes; INC could secure just 50 seats with 37.25 percent of votes. The CPI and the CPI (M) both secured 11 seats. JNP secured 3 seats and the BJP could win just 8 seats. In Punjab, too, the Shiromani Akali Dal won 73 seats out of the 100 seats polling 38.01 percent of votes whereas INC could win just 32 seats, JNP managed to get just one seat and BJP won some six seats (https://www.eci.nic.in).

Similarly, in Tamil Nadu it was the ADMK which swept the assembly polls by securing 132 seats out of 155 seats that it had contested for polling 37.03 percent of votes. The INC secured just 61 seats and DMK won 24 seats and Janata Party could bag just three seats (https://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it was evident that the Congress could not emerge victorious in all the states. In fact, fragmentation of the Indian Party System had already become a dominant phenomenon due to various reasons such as uneven economic development, regional disparities, over centralization, growth of region specific demands, needs and aspirations, growing ambition of local leaders, etc.

Hence, the Congress dominance at the centre and in most of the States was retained with the 1984 general election to the Lok Sabha and the subsequent assembly

elections. But the Indian party system was also seen to portray existence of federalized multi-party system with growing predominance and popularity of many state-based parties and regional parties. Hence it cannot be stated that the Indian party system, during the 1980s, was characterized by the absolute dominance by a single party.

The victory of the party can be attributed to the fact that with the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi there was a wave of popular sympathy for Rajiv Gandhi. This election was not decided on any concrete issues or by the performance of the government. Despite of the fact that the party was crippled with serious organizational weakness but still it was able to come back to power at the centre and in numerous state assemblies. The victory of 1984 placed Congress (I) in a dominant position among the other competing political parties at the central level but the party system remained fragmented at two levels.

The Congress (I) government under the Prime Ministership of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi embraced the process of liberalization to make India a developed nation. In March 1985 the government scrapped the license of twenty five broad categories of industries such as steel, electronic, mechanical engineering industries etc. and encouraged the growth of private sector. It believed that the public sector has a role to play in India's industrial development. A policy for promoting the export of software was announced by the Rajiv Gandhi government in December 1986. Rajiv Gandhi also opened up the telecommunication equipment sector for the private sector. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was established during era of Rajiv Gandhi government to regulate the stock market operations and protect the interests of the small investors. The Rajiv Gandhi government did not abandon its policies of social justice and equity and announced its twenty point programme in September 1988 which included strategies to redefine agriculture, poverty alleviation programme, enforcement of land reform measures, better use of irrigation, bigger harvests, special programme for rural labour, clean drinking water, health for all, two child norm, expansion of education, a responsive administration, etc. (Morris-Jones, 1975). Rajiv Gandhi administration resorted to decentralization of governance. Hence during his regime the Panchayati Raj Institutions was established. His efforts produced very vibrant economy with a high growth rate. He had also earned goodwill by initiating peace talks and signing accords in sensitive spots like Punjab and

Assam.[46] However, his governance was maligned with charges of corruption and for erratic decision making. Scandals like Bofors jeopardized his chances of coming back to power and tarnished his public image (Frankel, 1990, p.531). Hence the Congress (I) government under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi was gradually losing credibility in the eyes of the masses and as apprehended it was not able to come back to power with the next general election which was held on 1989. With the election of 1989 another non-Congress government came to power. It was a conglomeration of numerous parties and was named as the "National Front" under the leadership of V.P. Singh. [47]

This unfurled a new era in Indian politics. It saw coalition politics (two or more parties came together to form a government) becoming an order of the day. The unbridled competition for political power between political parties became acute and an unchangeable phenomenon of Indian politics. Not a single party was able to secure absolute majority on its own. The Indian National Congress suffered a decline in its position in the Indian party system. Due to its inability to withhold the trust and faith of the people and lack of potential leadership, political insights and maturity the party had to encounter the downfall of 1989. This testifies the sound electoral logic of the people of India and the victory of democracy.

The trend of pronounced coalitional politics since 1989:

The onset of coalitional and minority governments at the centre led to a significant changes in the Indian political system. The later part of 1980s saw the decline in Congress dominance and inability on the part of any one party from centre, right or left to accumulate majority for it to run the government at the centre. This accentuated the multi-party nature of the party system and made it fragmented in nature. The Ninth Lok Sabha elections in 1989 for the first time produced a 'Hung Parliament' in which no single party had a majority. The election of 1989 was held in an emotionally

[46] In July 1985 Rajiv Gandhi had reached an agreement which was known as the Rajiv Gandhi – Longowal Accord of 1985.Through the agreement it was agreed to transfer power to Chandigarh to Punjab, resolve border dispute between Punjab and Haryana and it also dealt with the issue of sharing of Ravi-Beas water. Similarly in 1985 Rajiv Gandhi had signed the Assam Accord with the AASU leaders by which the infiltrators who had migrated to Assam would be identified, detected and would be deported. Later on AASU and Asom Gana Sangram Parishad came together to form a regional party called the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).

[47] Since then a series of political instability gripped the Indian political system.

aggravated situation caused by the murder of Sikhs in Delhi, in the backdrop of heightened instances of communalism, rising prices, along with instances of leaders of the Congress (I) government being accused of serious charges for corruption (Frankel, 1990, p.530).[48] It was against this backdrop that the non-Congress parties were able to forge alliances against the dominant Congress party, which was in power till 1989. Congress (I) had given a remarkable performance in the 1984 Election. The Congress (I) under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi was able to secure 197 seats out of the 510 Lok Sabha seats with 39.53 percent of votes in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections (https://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress's share of popular vote dropped from almost 50 percent in 1984 to just below 40 percent in 1989 and its number of seats in Lok Sabha tumbled down from more than 400 to 197.[49] The most serious competition to Congress (I) came from the National Front which was under the leadership of V.P. Singh. The National Front comprised of seven parties and came into force since 17th September, 1988 which were ideologically disparate, regionally based political parties. The seven parties included: 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).

V.P. Singh, a cabinet member of Rajiv Gandhi after his resignation and subsequent suspension from the Congress (I) formed the Jan Morcha as a platform to express his views and protest against the corruption at high levels. Other groups and parties joined the Jan Morcha in the crusade and designed an alternative strategy with new agendas to produce a better social order. These conglomerations of parties expressed their intentions to introduce electoral reforms, decentralization of political and economic power, and elimination of corruption at all levels as well as produce a stable economy marked by balanced development both in the rural and urban areas (Chander, 2004, p. 34). It had also promised to usher national unity, democracy, socialism, secularism and federalism.

Simultaneously, Congress (I) too came up with several pledges and promises through their 1989 election manifesto to maintain unity, stability, democracy, secularism, socialism. In the election manifesto of 1989 the ruling Congress (I) expressed its

[48] Scandals like Bofors had actually jeopardized the prospect of his government. It was alleged that a huge amount of bribes were paid to the close associates of Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 by the Swedish manufacturer Bofors in order to obtain a contract for the sale of artillery to the Indian army.

[49] The Congress party has never won more than 49.10 percent of total votes polled in any of the India's nine general elections. It had formed government in seven of these nine elections at the centre.

intention to reorient the administration and make it more people sensitive, responsive, efficient and open. The Congress affirmed that once brought back to power it will strive hard to enhance the Freedom of Press, introduce judicial reforms, make judiciary accessible to the poor, weak and the deprived and bring back the Panchayati Raj and the Nagarpalika Bills in the Parliament.

Congress (I) took up some programmes to make India self-reliant, eradicate poverty, and illiteracy accelerate the process of industrialization and justice for all. Congress (I) accorded a special scope and attention to the special social groups and their issues in the 1989 manifesto. The Congress (I) had proposed to provided educational concessions to the students belonging to the backward classes, along with generous financial assistance. The Congress (I) had also promised to ensure social and economic development to the religious minorities and spread literacy among them, provide equality of status and honour and provide opportunities to the women of India for development and also assured reservation of seats in panchayats and other areas. It had also promised to provide provision for special reservation and attention towards the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Congress (I) had also expressed its desire to curb the forces of communalism and had pledged to resolve the issue of Ram Janam Bhoomi and Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (Singh, 1992, pp.50-71).

The Lok Sabha Election Results of 1989

However, the loss of credibility of the Congress (I) government of 1984-1989 led to the defeat of the party in the election of 1989. The Congress (I) in the 1989 Lok Sabha election could secure just 197 seats out 510 seats with 39.53 percent of votes. The National Front emerged with a disappointing 142 seats. Janata Dal (JD) contested 244 seats and won 143 seats with 17.79 percent of votes. BJP improved its position from 2 to 85 with 11.36 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in).[50] Following the 1989 election National Front under the leadership of V.P. Singh came to power as Congress (I) made it amply clear that it had no intention to form the Government at the centre although it was the largest party but was not having the required majority. Hence, National Front came to form the government being the second largest party with the

[50] All the parties in the 1989 election had performed miserably, the only exception being the BJP who was found to have improved its electoral performance.

outside support from BJP and the left parties.[51] Congress (I) again acquired the role of an opposition party. In the states too the position of the Congress became precarious.

The State Assembly Election Results

In Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India it was seen that INC was not able to perform well in the state Assembly Election of 1989. It secured just 94 seats with 27.90 percent of votes whereas the same party was able to secure 296 seats polling 39.25 percent of votes in the state assembly election of 1985.[52] BJP won 57 seats with 11.61 percent of votes. Hence the party was gradually improving its performance. It was the Janata Dal which secured the highest number of seats in the state. It bagged 208 seats with 29.71 percent of votes out of 356 seats polling 29.71 of votes. However BSP was able to secure just 13 seats only (https://www.eci.nic.in).

In Madhya Pradesh, it was BJP who was able to steal the show by fetching 220 seats out of the 269 seats that it had contested for with 39.14 percent of votes. Indian National Congress secured only 56 seats out of the 318 seats polling 33.38 percent of votes whereas the Janata Dal was able to grab only 28 seats with 7.71 percent of vote. In Bihar too a trend of decline was noticed in the performance of INC. It was able to win just 71 seats out of the 323 seats, with 24.78 percent of votes. It was Janata Dal which secured 122 seats with 25.61 percent of votes. BJP was able to bag just 39 seats and JMM was able to win just 19 seats. However, in the state assembly election of 1985 the scenario was totally different. Congress had experienced an overwhelming victory in the state. It secured 196 seats with 39.30 percent of votes (https://www.eci.nic.in). Hence, there was a steep decline in the share of votes for the Indian National Congress. Therefore if we give an aerial view it can be safely concluded that the Congress party had then suffered a steep decline in its overall performance.

In the state assembly election to the state of Karnataka held in 1989 INC won 178 seats polling 43.76 percent of votes. BJP secured only 4 of the 118 assembly seats. Janata Dal won 24 seats with 27.08 percent of votes. In the 1985 Assembly election

[51] BJP and the left parties had cooperated with the National Front on the issue of its anti-corruption drive led primarily by V.P Singh.

[52] The erosion of the support base among the Muslims and the Scheduled Caste led to the decline in the Congress's share of votes and seats in the state.

INC had secured just 65 seats and it was JNP which had surpassed all the other parties in the State by securing 139 seats (https://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it was seen that there was an improvement in the performance of the Congress party in the state. To the State Assembly Election of 1989 for the state of Andhra Pradesh it was seen that INC had surpassed Janata Dal and had secured 181 seats polling 47.09 percent of votes whereas JD was able to secure just one seat. TDP was able to bag just 74 seats polling 36.54 percent of votes. In Tamil Nadu too the INC secured just 26 seats and it was DMK, the state based party which had bagged 150 seats with 33.18 percent of votes. However in Kerala, INC had contested 91 seats and had won 55 seats with 32.07 percent of votes. CPI (M) had contested 64 seats and won only 28 seats with 21.74 percent of votes whereas in 1987 assembly election it was the CPI (M) which had secured 38 seats followed by INC with 33 seats (https://www.eci.nic.in). There was a revival for the Congress party in the state of Kerala. In south too therefore the Congress was not able to fare better. In most of the states it stood defeated during the period of 1989-1990 which indicate that there was a decline in the popularity of the Congress party in the south as well.

In Rajasthan following the state assembly elections of 1990 it was seen that the state had voted for an alternative to the Congress party. BJP had won 85 seats, polling 25.25 percent of votes whereas Congress won only 50 seats out of 200 seats with 33.64 percent of votes followed by Janata Dal with 55 seats and 21.58 percent of votes. However, in the 1985 Assembly election INC had secured 113 seats whereas BJP was able to bag just 39 seats. In Maharashtra, the performance of the party had declined in the state. INC won 141 seats out of the 276 seats in the state Assembly election of 1990. However, it had secured 20 more seats in the 1985 Assembly Election. In Gujarat too the Congress party had suffered a setback. It won 33 seats in the Assembly election of 1990 whereas in 1985 assembly election, the INC has secured 149 seats out of 182 seats with 55.55 percent of votes. In the Assembly election of 1990 the state had voted most for a non Congress alternative- the Janata Dal which had won 70 seats out of 147 seats polling 29.36 percent of votes. BJP secured 67 seats with 26.69 percent of votes (https://www.eci.nic.in). In west too the dominance of Indian National Congress has suffered a drastic blow.

In the state of West Bengal, INC was almost wiped out of the state as it was seen that it was not able to secure a good number of seats. In 1991 the INC had secured just 43

seats out of the 284 seats with 35.12 percent of votes. Even in 1985 Assembly election INC had secured only 40 seats. The state became a bastion for the left party. CPI (M) had emerged victorious for the Assembly election of 1991. It had bagged 189 seats out of the 213 seats with 36.87 percent of votes (https://www.eci.nic.in).

In the state election of 1990 to the legislative assembly of Orissa, INC had secured 10 seats only whereas JD won 123 seats out of 139 seats polling 53.69 percent of votes. In the state, INC was not able to retain its dominance. It had secured 117 seats with 51.08 percent of votes in the Assembly election of 1985. There was a steep decline in the number of seats as well as in the percentage of votes. It had secured only 29.78 percent of votes in 1991 compared to above 50 percent votes in 1985 assembly election (https://www.eci.nic.in). In the East too Congress was seen to have been cut to size by other parties. The North-Eastern region was seen to be almost under the reign of Indian National Congress. In the State election of 1990 in the State of Arunachal Pradesh INC had secured the highest number of seats with 37 seats, polling 44.25 percent of votes whereas the Janata Dal was able to secure only 11 seats with 33.34 percent of votes. In Manipur too INC had fetched for itself 24 seats with 33.71 percent of votes in comparison to 11 seats of Janata Dal with 19.82 percent of votes in the Assembly election of 1990(http://www.eci.nic.in). In the state legislative assembly election of 1989, INC had secured 36 seats and Nagaland People's Conference was able to manage 24 seats only. The situation was similar in the state of Mizoram too. In the 1989 Assembly election the Indian National Congress surpassed all the other parties with 23 seats whereas the Mizo National Front was able to secure 14 seats only. Despite of intensive attempt to provide India with a non-Congress government it was seen that the North-Eastern region voted in favour of the Congress party. It was only in Tripura where the Congress party was not able to cast its spell. In the assembly election of 1993, INC secured only 10 seats which was fifteen less than 1988 assembly election. The CPI (M) emerged victorious in both the consecutive assembly election. It had secured 44 seats in 1993 and 26 seats in 1988 (https://www.eci.nic.in). Its performance was in fact improving.

Congress was able to retain its base only in a few states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Kerala and in the North Eastern states. Hence the decline of the Congress was not absolute but yet substantial. It was only its inability to perform well during its tenure of 1984-1989 when it was voted to power with a massive mandate

and its inability to live up to the people's expectation had actually led to its downfall in the ninth general elections and in the subsequent assembly elections. The frequent charges of corruption and failure on the part of Rajiv Gandhi to emerge as an efficient leader further maligned the electoral fortune of the Congress party.

The disparate ruling National Front under V. P. Singh was not only ideologically different but also lacked a common minimum programme. These differences aggravated when the V. P. Singh government in 1990 decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission (reservation of seats in government jobs for Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes).[53] It took the decision without consulting the parties supporting it from outside. This had antagonized the Bharatiya Janata Party as it affected its interests.[54] The already existing dissensions between V.P. Singh, Devi Lal, and Chandrashekhar over the position of leadership culminated into the breakup of the front into a new political outfit. Chandrashekhar with the support of 55 members founded the Janata Dal (Samajwadi) and finally assumed office on November 1990 with support of Congress(I) (Chander, 2004, pp.38-39). Soon several issues of differences cropped up between the government and the Congress (I) and this finally led to the collapse of the Chandrashekhar government. He had to submit his resignation and a fresh election was ordered which was held in 1991. Considering the series of collapses of the government at the centre in the course of these 11 months, the Indian National Congress projected and claimed itself as the only party capable of providing stable governance at the centre in its election manifesto of 1991.

Conclusion:

The Indian National Congress has always remained a significant component of Indian politics. It had been the inheritor of the nationalist movement and could out distance its rivals for a certain period of time but its presence was never omnipotent or singular. Absence of any potential alternative enabled it to enjoy an undisputed rule

[53] The Mandal Commission had recommended introducing reservation of 27 percent of seats in educational institutions and in the public services for the Other Backward Castes considering the educational and social backwardness among this section of the society. The National Front had introduced reservation only in the public services.

[54] The implementation of the recommendation of the Mandal Commission report had in fact added a new momentum to caste politics.

for a certain period of time. Hence categorizing the Indian party system as a Congress predominated system would be an exaggeration. Indian politics is presently driven by four Ps namely, performance, populism, popularity and positivism. The symmetry between 'as promised' and 'as delivered' sustains a party in power. People vote in favour of progress and tangible developments. Leaders and parties who associate themselves with the aspirations of the common masses and raises hope of forging ahead as well as ensures substantial developments in all areas emerge as their popular leader, win elections and hence come to power. Inability on the part of the Congress party to abide by these parameters initiated a process of downfall for the Congress Party and enabled the birth of non-Congress alternatives at the expense of the Congress Party. These alternatives replaced Congress from power both at the national and state level. However, they could not emerge as a formidable force to reckon with and hence made the party system volatile in nature. Since 1989 the party system was seen to be in a serious state of flux. Defection, indifferences, dissensions and conflict over political opportunities and striking mismatch between poll promises and actions (performance) accentuated the instability and incoherent nature of the Indian party system at both the levels.

Chapter III

The Fragmentation of the Indian Party System Since 1957

The Indian Party System provides a framework where multiple political parties coexist for a single nation. This multiplicity of political parties offered a vast array of choices to the Indian population who have exercised their universal suffrage in such a pattern that it has made the Indian Party System messy in nature. The multi-ethnic characters of the Indian society have provided impetus to the process of proliferation of political parties. The availability of countless options to vote for has made the Indian Party System highly disarrayed in nature. The Indian party system as it exhibits is multiparty in nature since its origin, although the Indian Party System kept reconfiguring structurally with every election. As discernible it was never uniform and defined in character and became more fragmented with each election. Since its inception it showed some signs of uniformity and solidarity at both the levels but with each successive election it lost its cohesion and stability. With the 1951 state election Congress won a majority of seats in all the states except in Travancore, Cochin and Madras where it failed to secure absolute majority (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the 1954 assembly polls Congress again failed to win absolute majority in Travancore-Cochin. Jammu and Kashmir was under the rule of National Conference Party which bagged 70 out of the 75 contested seats since its first assembly polls in 1962 since independence. In 1957 Kerala voted for a non-Congress alternative with its first assembly polls. With the 1960 assembly polls, Congress Party formed a government in coalition with Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and Muslim League (MUL). Nagaland too had a non-Congress government headed by Naga National Organization (http://www.eci.nic.in). However, since 1967 general election and state assembly elections the party system lost its uniformity and became intensely fragmented and since 1989 Lok Sabha election and the subsequent assembly polls the trend became more acute, i.e.; the party system became multiple and more multi-party in nature and continued to remain inconsistent at both the levels.

E.Sridharan (2002, 2011) has discussed about the process of the fragmentation of the Indian party system in his article *"The Fragmentation of the Indian Party system"* and has explained the entire phenomenon by classifying into various phases from

1952 onwards. Although he has not dealt in detail the factors that perpetuated the process of the fragmentation of the Indian party system. Balveer Arora (2002) as well has strongly argued in his article *"Political Parties and the Party System: The Emergence of New Coalitions"* that emergence of state-based parties had actually accentuated the process of the fragmentation of the Indian party system. Although there are numerous other factors which has contributed towards the process of fragmentation of the party system and rise of multiple state party system and heterogeneous composition of the union government. Balveer Arora (2003) in his article *"Federalization of India's Party system"* has emphatically pointed towards the trend of bifurcation of the Indian party system into national level party system and state party systems. Through his concept of federalization he has emphasized upon the phenomenon of the fragmentation of the Indian party system. His writing solely highlighted the role of state-based parties in facilitating the process of fragmentation and has not taken into account the various other factors that have extensively contributed towards the process of bifurcation of the Indian party system which has stabilized the process of fragmentation of the party system. The Indian party system has always been in a state of flux. The party system is said to have evolved from a competitive multi-party system with Congress predominance as a majority party to a coalition system, from a period of social and ideological cohesive coalitions to factionalism and hence fragmentation, from stability to fluctuations and instability. Hence, the chapter tries to portray how the party system of a country stands fragmented in nature by getting bifurcated into national and state level with the focus on the electoral trajectory of the political parties and their evolution in the party system with the Lok sabha elections and the numerous assembly polls. There is no uniformity in the nature and composition of the party system at the national level; neither does all the state possess a uniform and homogeneous party system. It is then followed by a discussion on some of the important features of the vibrant Indian party system. The chapter will also discuss the political reasons for the fragmentation of the party system at both the levels. It also contains discussion about the most significant reasons for rise of BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and the regional parties at both the levels of the Indian party system. The chapter will also discuss about how time and again Congress has tried to resurrect its position in the party system since 1998. Attempt has been made to show how with each successive assembly polls each state have voted incoherently thereby bestowing each state with a different state party

system that produced a fragmented[1] picture of the Indian party system as a whole by using electoral verdicts which best expresses the spirit of democracy. Anindya Saha (1999) stated that principle of federalism, the electoral law and politics based on social cleavage has contributed towards the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system. Balveer Arora (2002) has further stated that growth of state specific interests and subsequently the growth of state based parties has led to fragmentation of the Indian party system. E. Sridharan (2002 & 2011) has provided seven explanations that explain fragmentation of the Indian party system. According to Sridharan, reasons like delinking between parliamentary and state assembly elections, growing politicization of social cleavages, growth of political consciousness, mobilization of new classes, growing centralization within the Congress Party, growing politicization of communal and caste cleavages since 1990s, the systematic properties of the FTPT electoral system have contributed towards the fragmentation of the Indian party system. However, the scattered voting pattern of the Indian electorates has also contributed towards the fragmentation of the Indian party system. Lack of any strong allegiance to any particular political party and the rising aspirations of the common masses for a better tomorrow led to a scattered electoral verdict by the electorates. The electorates had at their disposal a large number of political parties at any given time (during national and state level elections). They tend to choose the best option that can maximize their benefits which they can extract from the policies and programmes offered in the form of manifestoes. As this choices increases the electoral verdicts gets scattered and contributes towards the fragmentation of the Indian party system.

[1] By the term fragmentation I refer to the disintegrated composition of the Indian party system which stands bifurcated into two levels-the national party system and the state party systems. Each state vote distinctively keeping in view numerous considerations ranging from caste affiliations, tribe, community, religion, language, and most significantly socio-economic development policies and visions which would ensure social, political and economic upward mobility unleashed by the contending political parties competing to come to power. The Indian Party System is so fragmented in nature that it gives an impression that amidst unity, India stands divided with multiple state party systems where one is so dissimilar from the other. A single country producing such a diversified party system that stands bifurcated into two levels, the government that are formed in these levels have complex composition or at times are singularly formed with absolute majority and is marked by not only coalitions but also by new formations, mergers, breakup, splits and absorption.

Features of the Indian Party System

The Indian party system has made a long journey from Congress predominated system to a coalitional era for several decades.[2] At this juncture it becomes pertinent to talk about some of the glaring features of the vibrant Indian party system as it exists today.

Firstly, India has a competitive multi-party system with numerous political parties contending for power to rule. The state level party system is characterized by a blending of bipolarity and multipolarity contest for power. The Indian party system has no defined nature or structure and stands bifurcated between national and state level party systems. Several state-based and regional parties play significant roles, sometime as coalition partners and sometime as independent power. Secondly, the chief feature of the party system has been fragmentation. Thirdly, politics based on social welfare programmes or on 'populism' been another unconventional feature of the party system. Politics now is more pragmatic than ideological. Fourthly, fronts and alliance building has remained a common phenomenon and has weakened the party system. The political parties in several instances stands largely deviated from the role which they should perform and hence have failed to earn compliance from the masses. Hence, people tend to vote inconsistently for varied options offered by the vast menu of choices provided by the Indian Party System. Fourthly, coalitional politics had become a very significant phenomenon and has remained as an unchanged phenomenon. This has, in fact, stabilized the multi-party system. Lot many coalitional partners were state-based or regional parties who had helped to form governments at the centre and this has lead to federalization of the party system. However with the recently concluded Lok Sabha and assembly elections the electorates have voted in favour of political parties with absolute majorities. BJP acquired power and came to form the government at the national level with absolute majorities. This has rendered some stability to the national level party system and has done away with compromises, bargains, persuasions and dissensions that can be

[2] The ninth general election of 1989 produced a 'hung' parliament when not a single political party was able to secure absolute majority in the parliament. It was then when a conglomeration of seven parties under the name of National Front government came to power. However, the 2014 Lok Sabha election has rendered some stability to the party system at the national level with the rise of BJP as the 'majority party' which was able to cross the half–way mark on its own after almost after two decades. However, the trend of fragmentation of the Indian party system as a whole still continues as numerous states with the recent assembly polls have given verdict in favour of non-BJP parties.

designated as some of the messy features of the coalitional form of government. Similarly states like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal too have voted in favour of AIADMK and TMC respectively and bestowed them with absolute majorities. Fifthly, oppositions are no more 'parties of pressure'. They have acquired a robust role in the political system and leave no leaf unturned to criticize and uphold the drawbacks of the ruling government and make every possible attempt through campaign and populist policies to come power. Regionalism, growth of sub-regional parties and rise in political mobilization on the basis of ethnic identities has become characteristics of the party system. Sixthly, issues like ethnicity, nationalism, right of self-determination keeps moulding the process of Indian politics and subsequently affecting the party system.[3] This led to the growth of serious disruptive tendencies and mushrooming of parties and groups, which has lead to realignments and reconfiguration of the party system. Seventhly, Factionalism and splintering of parties (mostly at the state level) has been an important feature of the party system. This results in qualitative and quantitative changes in the party system. Presently what has emerged is a fragmented competitive multi-party system with multi-dimensional polarization in the structure of political competition for power.

Some prominent reasons for the bifurcation of the Indian Party System

With the decline of "one party pre-dominated system" in the Indian politics or with the demise of the Indian National Congress (INC) as the "majority party", the Indian party system has become bifurcated between a national level party system and state level party systems, more particularly since 1967. The current situation is characterized by the multiplicity of parties which continues to grow. Decline of mediated politics and dissidents within the Congress party was the prime reason behind the frequent realignment and reconfiguration of the Indian party system. The general decline of public faith upon ruling government and erosion of loyalty of the people towards the veteran Congress Party can be considered as the other reason for the frequent realignment and reconfiguration of the party system. The mismatch between proclamations of policies and populist programmes and the actual

[3] The demand for separate statehood has been the result of this and these demands have tend to affect the state politics at large.

performance and accomplishments of the government has gradually become a serious reason for the frequent realignment and reconfiguration the Indian party system.

Corruption has been rejected repeatedly by the masses but the government in power easily became a prey to it and taints its public image, so people fail to repose faith in the parties which lead to downfall of government and the rise of another power thereby making the party system largely volatile in nature. It can be discerned that coalition politics has remain an inevitable phenomenon of the Indian political system, both at the centre and in the state level. The only difference being that the party which had reservation towards had been the creator of it. The Indian National Congress from 2004 till 2014 had been the leading partner of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government at the centre.

The Fragmentation of Indian Party System: Some Specific Reasons

It was only since 2004 general election that the Indian National Congress (INC) was able to revive its lost grounds and its position in the Indian party system which remained in disarray since 1967. Since 1989 its position relegated in the party system which enabled few developments such as rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)[4] and the soaring assertiveness and importance of the regional parties at both the levels of the Indian party system and unprecedented rise in the formation of alliances and fronts.

Rise of regional political outfits have time and again thwarted the electoral fortunes of INC[5]. Anti-Congressism has facilitated the growth of alternatives in the party system and this development led to transformation and reconfiguration in the party system. 1967 is a hall mark year that started producing serious changes in the Indian party system that also saw bifurcation between the central and state level party system because with the fourth general election and assembly polls it was seen that nine states had non-congress governments, each different from the other in respect of ideology, nature and character. Hence it can be said the party system became

[4] BJP since its inception in 1980 has made its biggest achievement in the Indian party system by emerging as the ruling party at the national level by bagging absolute majority of seats and it has now replaced INC as the 'majority party' in the Indian party system.

[5] The process of emergence of alternative political party that could replace the "Majority party", i.e.; the Congress party began in 1967 in several states of India and a similar second round of emergence of the state parties began since the 1980s.

fragmented in nature since 1967. Growing mobilization based on the line of identity and state–specific interest, distorted policies of over centralization by the Congress party and the then Congress-led central government, the insensitivity of the then Congress-led government towards the needs of the units (states) of a diversified country like India, uneven economic development after independence that led to regional disparity, growth of new classes in a multi-identity society like India, birth of new aspirants for political power due to circulation of political elites from lower to higher levels, growth of regionalism in lesser developed areas to combat the truncated economic, agricultural, industrial and growth policies of the then Congress-led central government[6] are some of the reasons that facilitated the growth of regional parties. These developments contributed towards the fragmentation of the party system by producing 'alternatives' to the Congress party which since independence had occupied the position of the 'majority party' in the Indian party system. States like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala produced non-congress governments. The Indian National Congress headed the central government with the 1967 Lok Sabha election. In fact, lot many states like Maharashtra, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tripura had Congress-ruled governments.

Thus it is pretty well discernible that the Indian party system stood bifurcated at two levels- centre and states. The state level party systems had remained under the rule of various political hues although Congress continued to rule with some drop in its share of votes and seats at the centre and in some states[7]. According to my opinion, due to the absence of affinity or irreconcilability between the primordial ethnic affiliations and the feeling of nationality in a diversified and heterogeneous country like India coupled with the inefficiency of the then Congress- ruled government at the centre to assimilate the two are the most important factors that acted as a catalyst towards the fragmentation of the society that is characterized by diversified language, religion,

[6] *See* Sudha Pai, *"Regional Parties and the Emerging Pattern of Politics in India"*, The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 51, No. 3 (July - Sept. 1990) (pp. 393-415).

[7] This period was marked with grave discontent towards the congress-ruled central government because of economic crisis, repeated failure of monsoons, widespread drought, decline in agricultural production, serious food shortage, rise in price of essential commodities, growing unemployment, bandhs and hartals, depletion of foreign exchange reserves, devaluation of Indian rupee, lack of agrarian strategy for development of agricultural sector, rate of savings dropped drastically instead of increasing, non-implementation of community development programmes and land reform measures, rise in rural poverty.

caste, community, etc. Hence this led to rise of apathy towards the ruling government or anti-Congressism in the country that further contributed towards the bifurcation between the two levels of party system and subsequently led to the fragmentation of the Indian party system and emergence of multiple state party systems.

The Pattern of Fragmentation of the Indian Party System

Signs of fragmentation of the Indian Party System emerged very prominently with the rise of discontent in the state of Tamil Nadu (Madras was renamed as Tamil Nadu). Two events led to such reconfiguration in the structure of the Indian party system. It was when in 1964 after the death of Nehru, Gulzarilal Nanda as Home Minister asked to report all other Union Ministers about the progress of usage of Hindi as official language among the non-Hindi speaking states. It was then a serious violence broke out in the state of Tamil Nadu. The Tamils took this as serious assault on their ethnic identity despite of assurance from the Nehru government that no forceful imposition for adopting Hindi as official language of a state will be made on the non- Hindi speaking states. As soon as the directive was issued the state got engulfed in massive demonstrations, riots, and self immolations by students and agitators. Anti-Hindi campaign was organised throughout the state. Police had to resort to firing to curb the agitators. This made Congress party unpopular in the state and at its expense the Dravida Munnetra Party (DMK)[8] came up to fill the vacuum (Kohli, 2009, pp. 53-56). Moreover, the issue of food crisis[9] due to drought during the period of 1965-1966 also jeopardized the position of the Congress party in the state. In Madras (now Tamil Nadu) the DMK, the state-based party, came to power in the state with absolute majority. Congress was just wiped out of the state's political scenario. In the State Election to the Legislative Assembly of Madras, 1967, DMK bagged 137 seats out of

[8] DMK (and AIADMK) are regional parties of Tamil Nadu and both have sprung from the Dravidian movement of the forties. DMK was founded by Annadurai in 1949. Both are ethnic parties and have committed themselves in reviving Tamil language and culture. DMKs are socialistic in nature and attract the poor and the downtrodden as their base for political support with its populist and socialistic measures like grant of subsidies to farmers, removal of land ceilings, mid-day meals, old age pension, etc. in the era when the country was passing through serious economic challenges and social transformations.

[9] DMK pledged to provide rice at Re. 1 per kg. if voted to power as well as promised to preserve English as the official language and ensure more autonomy for the state in the wake of over centralization drive by Indira Gandhi government.

174 seats with 40.69 percent of votes and 54.32 percent of seats whereas INC could manage just 51 seats out of the 232 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

DMK became popular with its anti-Hindi, anti-North and pro-Tamil campaigns in the state. Since then DMK had remained a significant component of the state politics. Similarly eight other states also witnessed similar developments, coalition governments[10] consisting of different non-Congress parties were formed in these states. The wave of anti-Congressism actually facilitated the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system. The sole aim of all the anti-congress parties to keep the Congress away from the helm of power resulted in formation of such coalitions or non-congress governments under the name of Samyukt Vidhayak Dal (SVD). West Bengal too witnessed a similar phenomenon. The strategy of unity of opposition for dislodging Congress paid off. A United Front of the entire major non- Congress parties in West Bengal was forged that came to power with the 1969 assembly polls. Orissa too had a non-Congress government because Congress could not muster the required majority in the assembly polls. Jana Congress allied with Swatantra party to oust the Congress from the helm of power in the state. Bihar too had a SVD government. Kerala too voted for a non-Congress government in the state. Congress was reduced to an opposition party in the legislature because it did not win even one-tenth of the seats in the assembly. Out of the 133 seats in the assembly Congress could secure only 9 seats and United Front and its allies was graced with 117 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Economic crisis, food scarcity, rising prices of essential commodities such as rice maligned the electoral fortune of the Congress government in the state of Kerala. Small landowners deserted Congress because of the agrarian strategy that was adopted by INC had uneven consequences for the large section of the peasantry. Moreover, they desired to have 'stable government' and were distressed with such quick succession of Ministries and President's rule in the state in the previous years. Therefore, they opted for an 'alternative' in the form of United Front ministry which promised to provide 'basic changes' and 'stable government' in their manifesto. In the state of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh defection (by its own members) kept Congress out of power. So it can be fairly concluded that the states were having their own system and the party system as a whole exhibited a

[10] In the bid to keep the Congress party out of power all the non-congress parties united under one banner and formed in most instances ideologically incongruent government giving rise to the trend of forming coalitions at the state level since 1967.

fragmented character. Although the central party system remained consistent as a competitive multi-party system with Congress predominance as a majority party but the states started to possess their own party systems.

Congress slipped into crisis with its spilt in 1969. However, socialism or the slogan of '*Garibi hatao'* (remove poverty) and certain pro-poor strategies saved Congress from absolute decline in the centre with the next general election of 1971. INC secured 352 seats out of 441 seats (79.82 percent of seats) polling 43.68 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Her party swept all the assembly polls post 1971 general election. However, the fragmented nature of the party system persisted. The State of Tamil Nadu consecutively voted for a non-Congress alternative, namely, the Dravida Munnetra Party (DMK). It occupied the state helm with the 1971 assembly election by securing 184 seats out of the 203 seats that it had contested for. Indian National Congress (Organisation) could bag just 15 seats of the 201seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The assembly polls following the 1977 general election also created a messy picture of the Indian party system. The party system remained fragmented and what emerged were multiple state party systems. In Tamil Nadu, it was the DMK which left its mark with 48 seats out of the 230 seats, polling 24.89 percent of votes whereas the Janata Party could win just 10 seats and INC could win just 27 seats only. In West Bengal, the CPI (M) could win the state Assembly election with 178 seats out of 224 seats with 35.46 percent of votes. Janata Party and the INC could manage to get just 29 seats and 20 seats respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Janata Party emerged victorious in the state of Uttar Pradesh with 352 seats polling 47.76 percent of votes, whereas INC could secure just 47 seats out of the 395 seats that it had contested for polling 31.94 percent of votes. The Janata Party even managed to capture the state of Bihar by occupying 214 seats out of the 311 seats that it had contested for polling 42.68 percent of votes. However, INC could secure just 57 seats out of the 286 seats, polling 23.58 percent of votes. The Janata Party could even manage to win in the State of Rajasthan by winning 152 seats with 50.39 percent of votes. INC could manage to win just 41 seats out of the 186 seats that it had contested for with 31.49 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).

Janata Party even swept the Assembly Elections to the State of Madhya Pradesh by securing 230 seats out of the 319 seats with 47.28 percent of votes. The INC could

bag just 84 seats out of the 320 seats, polling 35.88 percent of votes. In the State of Orissa, the Janata Party won 110 seats out of the 147 seats with 49.17 percent of votes. Whereas INC could win just 26 seats out of the 146 seats that it had contested for with 31.02 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In the state of Assam, Janata Party swept the polls by winning 53 seats whereas INC could secure just 26 seats and INC (I) 26 seats. In Delhi, too Janata Party emerged victorious by winning 46 of the 56 seats, polling 52.58 percent of votes, whereas the INC could win just 10 seats out of 52 seats that it had contested for (http://www.eci.nic.in).

However, in the state of Andhra Pradesh it was the INC (I) which emerged victorious with 175 seats out of the 290 seats polling 39.25 percent of votes. The Janata Party could win just 60 seats and INC could manage to get just 30 seats only. In Karnataka, too INC (I) emerged victorious with 149 seats with 44.25 percent of votes. Janata Party could manage to win just 59 seats with 37.95 percent of votes whereas INC could win just 2 seats, polling 7.99 percent of votes. In Kerala, too it was the INC which emerged victorious with 38 seats out of the 54 seats that it had contested for with 20.02 percent of votes. CPI and the CPI (M) could win 23 seats and 17 seats respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence we see a fragmented sketch of the party system where each state was not under the rule of any single political party.

The Congress (I) contested the 1980 Lok Sabha election. Congress (I) of Mrs. Indira Gandhi came back to power at the centre by securing 353 seats out of the 492 seats that it had contested for polling 42.69 percent of votes as compared to the 352 seats and nearly 44 percent of popular votes in 1971. Whereas the Janata Party (JNP) could bag only 31 seats and Janata Party (Secular) could secure just 41 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress swept the assembly election in Andhra Pradesh by securing 60 seats whereas JNP could secure just 1 seat. Congress even won in the election to the state legislative Assembly of Bihar by winning 169 seats out of the 311 seats that it had contested for, polling 34.20 percent of votes. JNP drew a blank and BJP could win just 21 seats polling 8.41 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Even in Maharashtra the INC (I) won the state Assembly election by securing 186 seats out of 286 seats with 44.50 percent of votes. In the state of Rajasthan too the INC (I) emerged victorious and won 133 seats polling 42.96 percent of votes. BJP could secure 32 seats with 18.60 percent of votes. The Janata Party (JP) could manage to win just 8 seats and JNP (SC) won 7 seats and JNP (SR) drew a blank. The

Congress was able to win from Uttar Pradesh as well by bagging 309 seats out of 424 seats with 37.65 percent of the popular votes. BJP could win just 11 seats and Janata Party drew a blank (http://www.eci.nic.in). In West Bengal INC (I) of Mrs. Indira Gandhi could not do enough to maintain its electoral performance. It was the CPI (M) which continued with its dominance in the state with 174 seats and 38.49 percent of popular votes in alliance with other Left parties. Whereas the INC could win just 49 seats polling 35.73 percent of votes. In the state of Tamil Nadu too it was the ADMK which swept the assembly election by securing 129 seats with 38.75 percent of votes. DMK and INC (I) was able to win 37 and 31 seats respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence despite of some traces of consistency in opting for political parties to power, the trend of fragmentation still persisted with West Bengal and Tamil Nadu opting for a different alternative.

In many of the states non-Congress governments came to power. The principle of federalism, as alleged, was getting violated due to the acting of the central government in an authoritarian manner. Gradually, this led to a growing sense of regionalism and demand for separate states gained momentum in many of the states during the period of the 1980s. In the North-East[11] such as in Nagaland and Mizoram there was resentment over the rule of Congress and new regional parties came to power. Regional opposition took the form of insurgencies in many of the states such as in Assam and in Punjab. In Punjab the extremist wing of Akali Dal demanded a sovereign state of Khalistan.

In December 1984 the Eighth General elections took place. The mandate went in favour of the Congress (I) and was against all disruptive forces which threatened integrity, peace, unity and progress of the country. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, son of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was elected as the Prime Ministerial candidate on the advice of some senior Congress leaders after Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her own Sikh guards. Congress (I) won the 1984 election with an overwhelming majority of 404 seats, polling 49.10 percent of votes. BJP[12] could win just 2 seats and Janata Party could bag just 10 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

11 At the time of Independence the entire North- East region except Manipur and Tripura comprised of Assam. The reorganisation of Assam was completed by 1972. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were carved out of Assam.

[12] BJP was successor of the Janata Party. In 1977 Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which was formed by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951, joined number of other parties to form Janata party in 1977 in response to

In the State Assembly Election of 1985 to the state of Arunachal Pradesh the INC emerged victorious with 21 seats polling 43.07 percent of votes. JNP drew a blank. In Assam too the INC emerged victorious with 25 seats and 23.23 percent of the popular votes. JNP and the BJP drew a blank and the CPI (M) could win just two seats. In Bihar the INC could win 196 seats out of 323 seats with 39.30 percent of votes in the State Assembly election of 1985. In Gujarat too it was INC which won in the Assembly election by winning 149 seats out of the 182 seats that it had contested for, polling 55.55 percent of votes. BJP could win just 11 seats and JNP bagged 14 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Uttar Pradesh, the INC was able to retain its base with 269 seats and 39.25 percent of the popular votes. BJP secured only 16 seats and the Janata Party could win just 20 seats. In Rajasthan too the INC was able to perform well and won the assembly polls of 1985. It won 113 seats out of the 199 seats that it had contested for polling 46.57 percent of votes. BJP secured 39 seats and JNP bagged just 10 seats. Even Madhya Pradesh INC did well and secured 48.87 percent of votes with 250 seats. In Maharashtra, INC emerged victorious in the 1985 assembly polls with 43.41 percent of votes and 161 seats out of the 287 seats that it had contested for (http://www.eci.nic.in).

However, it was seen that in many of the States the Congress was not able to retain its bases thereby ensuring continuity in the trend of fragmentation of the party system. In the 1985 State Assembly Election to the State of Andhra Pradesh it was the Telegu Desam Party (TDP) which had emerged victorious with 202 seats with 46.21 percent of popular votes; INC could secure just 50 seats with 37.25 percent of votes. The CPI and the CPI (M) both secured 11 seats. JNP secured 3 seats and the BJP could win just 8 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).[13] The drive of over-centralization by Mrs. Indira

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the wave of anti-Congressism in the country during the late 1960s. Janata party formed government in the centre and in many states but due to various loopholes it started to lose its appeal among the masses. Eventually in 1980 few members of Janata party broke away to give shape to another party namely Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which in due course of time emerged as the most staunch opponent of the Congress party and even came to head a coalitional government in the centre and formed governments in many states on its own or in alliance with regional parties. *See* Bruce D. Graham, '*The Challenge of Hindu Nationalism: The Bharatiya Janata Party in Contemporary Politics*', pp.155-171. 1987.

[13] Based on populist themes such as holding up of Telegu nationalism and Telegu pride, selling rice at subsidizes rates, free lunch for school children, removal of capitation fees in school, promising to install a clean corruption free efficient government, restoration of real democracy, protection of the minorities, development of the depressed classes, security to the women and their property rights removal of unemployment, etc. NTR swept the polls and fetched 198 seats alone of the 287 seats and allied with Sanjay Vichar Manch of Maneka Gandhi which contested for five seats. Together it bagged 203 seats polling 46.3 percent of votes. The Congress despite of hectic campaigning bagged just 60

Gandhi and the continuous assault of the autonomy of the state because of the policies of centralization in both party and government matters led to an arousal of dissensions among certain sections of the society. Therefore, the Congress party which continued to occupy the state mantle for more than three decades suffered a nose dive. The attitude of the central leader(s) wounded the self–respect of the Telegus. The Party High Command encouraged factionalism at the state level to keep the state units into disarray so that no one emerges as strong leader and the Congress High Command made the state leaders dance to their tune. To make the matter worse it was seen that the Congress High Command changed Chief Ministers (four times) at its will frequently during 1978-1982 (Suri, 2004, p. 285). These chief ministers were weak and inefficient and could earn their position only because they were loyal to the Gandhi's (Suri, 2004, p.285). The common people revolted against this inefficient administration which became a mere puppet in the hands of the central leader(s). Development became secondary and factionalism disrupted the smooth functioning of the state government as well as the state unit of the Congress party. The state of Andhra Pradesh also witnessed a wave of anti-Congressism. Hence, a vacuum was created which was filled in by Telegu Desam party (TDP). NTR captivated the fancies of the common people with his mythological roles were he mostly played characters of 'saviours' of the common man from evils. NTR was popular among the common masses of Andhra Pradesh because of this affinity with the Telegu film industry where he was very popular as a star and has acted in more than 100 films in numerous roles as god, good king or common man. He portrayed himself as a god who was sent on earth to serve the people of Andhra Pradesh. He played the roles of personality who stood for good and noble things and fought against anything that is bad, mean and corrupt (Narayan, 1983, p. 5). Hence, Telegu Desam Party under the chief ministership of NTR came to power in the state.

In Punjab, too, the Shiromani Akali Dal won 73 seats out of the 100 seats polling 38.01 percent of votes whereas INC could win just 32 seats, JNP managed to get just one seat and BJP won some six seats (http://www.eci.nic). With the ascendency of Indira Gandhi to power she resorted to the drive for over centralization of power. The

seats and 36 percent of votes. However, TDP had to prove its popularity and its mettle in a short span with a mid-term poll of 1985 when the former assembly got dissolved following a coup which was launched by N.Bhaskar Rao supported by Congress (I) for deserting NTR because of his autocratic way of running the party. Bhaskar Rao created Democratic Telegu Desam party after it broke away from TDP in 1984. (Suri, 2004, pp. 289-290).

autonomy of the states as per the constitutional norms became irrelevant as she personalized and nationalized state issues and curbed the powers of the state leaders and initiated central intervention. The political and economic centralizing tendencies of the Indira-led Congress (I) and its highly interventionist policies retarded the economic growth and prosperity of the state. This aggravated the Punjab crisis as the central leader(s) refused to see to their terms and demands and adopted repressive measures to curb the demands by the state. At the expense of the Congress (I) Shiromani Akali Dal gained prominence. Moreover, the anti-Sikh riot in the spring of 1984 further maligned the electoral fortune of the Congress (I) in the state (Kohli, 2009, p.56). Similarly, in Tamil Nadu it was the ADMK which swept the assembly polls by securing 132 seats out of 155 seats that it had contested for polling 37.03 percent of votes. The INC secured just 61 seats and DMK won 24 seats and Janata Party could bag just three seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it was evident that the Congress could not emerge victorious in all the states. In fact, regionalization of Indian politics had already become a dominant phenomenon which contributed towards the fragmentation of the Indian Party system.

The trend of fragmentation continued even with the 1989 election as well. The 1989 polls saw stabilization in the trend of coalition politics at both the levels. The 1989 Lok Sabha election produced a 'Hung Parliament' with no one party from the right, left or centre was able to secure an absolute majority. The National Front under the leadership of V.P Singh comprising of seven parties which was formed since 17th September, 1988, came to power with the 1989 Lok Sabha election which comprised of ideologically disparate, regionally based political parties. The seven parties included: 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). National Front secured just 142 seats despite of its crusade against corruption at high levels of the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress (I) government of 1984-1989. Scandals like Bofors had actually jeopardized the prospect of his government. It was alleged that a huge amount of bribes were paid to the close associates of Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 by the Swedish manufacturer Bofors in order to obtain a contract for the sale of artillery to the Indian army. National Front came to form the government with the outside support of BJP and the Left parties. The latter extended support to the minority National Front government on the issue of anti-corruption drive led by V.P

Singh, a former cabinet member of Rajiv Gandhi led government who after his resignation and subsequent suspension from the Congress (I) formed the Jan Morcha as a platform to express his views and protest against the corruption at high levels. Other groups and parties joined the Jan Morcha in the crusade and designed an alternative strategy with new agendas to produce a better social order. These conglomerations of parties expressed their intentions to introduce electoral reforms, decentralization of political and economic power, and elimination of corruption at all levels as well as produce a stable economy marked by balanced development both in the rural and urban areas (Chander, 2004, p. 34). It had also promised to usher national unity, democracy, socialism, secularism and federalism. The loss of credibility of the Congress (I) government of 1984-1989 led to the defeat of the party in the election of 1989. The Congress (I) in the 1989 Lok Sabha election could secure just 197 seats out of 510 seats with 39.53 percent of votes in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress's share of popular vote dropped from almost 50 percent in 1984 to just below 40 percent in 1989 and its number of seats in Lok Sabha tumbled down from more than 400 to 197.[14] Janata Dal (JD) contested 244 seats and won 143 seats with 17.79 percent of votes. BJP improved its position from 2 to 85 with 11.36 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).[15]

The state assembly election accentuated the fragmented character of the party system. In Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India it was seen that the Janata Dal secured the highest number of seats in the state. It bagged 208 seats with 29.71 percent of votes out of 356 seats polling 29.71 of votes. INC was not able to perform well in the state Assembly Election of 1989. It secured just 94 seats with 27.90 percent of votes whereas the same party was able to secure 296 seats polling 39.25 percent of votes in the state assembly election of 1985.[16] BJP won 57 seats with 11.61 percent of votes. Hence the party was gradually improving its performance. However BSP was able to secure just 13 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In Madhya Pradesh, BJP surpassed the other political parties contesting the assembly poll by fetching 220 seats out of the 269 seats that it had contested for with 39.14

[14] The Congress party has never won more than 49.10 percent of total votes polled in any of the India's nine general elections. It had formed government in seven of these nine elections at the centre.
[15] All the parties in the 1989 election had performed miserably, the only exception being the BJP who was found to have improved its electoral performance.
[16] The erosion of the support base among the Muslims and the Scheduled Caste led to the decline in the Congress's share of votes and seats in the state.

percent of votes and formed the government in the state. Indian National Congress secured only 56 seats out of the 318 seats polling 33.38 percent of votes whereas the Janata Dal was able to grab only 28 seats with 7.71 percent of vote (http://www.eci.nic.in). Therefore, the North as well reflected a fragmented pattern of voting.

In the state assembly election to the state of Karnataka held in 1989 INC won 178 seats polling 43.76 percent of votes. BJP secured only 4 of the 118 assembly seats. Janata Dal won 24 seats with 27.08 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). To the State Assembly Election of 1989 for the state of Andhra Pradesh it was seen that INC had surpassed Janata Dal and had secured 181 seats polling 47.09 percent of votes whereas JD was able to secure just one seat. TDP was able to bag just 74 seats polling 36.54 percent of votes. In Tamil Nadu too the INC secured just 26 seats and it was DMK, the state based party which had bagged 150 seats with 33.18 percent of votes. However in Kerala, INC had contested 91 seats and had won 55 seats with 32.07 percent of votes. CPI (M) had contested 64 seats and won only 28 seats with 21.74 percent of votes whereas in 1987 assembly election it was the CPI (M) which had secured 38 seats followed by INC with 33 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). There was a revival for the Congress party in the state of Kerala. In south we see that each state had voted for different political hues making the party system fragmented in nature.

In Rajasthan following the state assembly elections of 1990 it was seen that the state had voted for an alternative to the Congress party. BJP had won 85 seats, polling 25.25 percent of votes whereas Congress won only 50 seats out of 200 seats with 33.64 percent of votes followed by Janata Dal with 55 seats and 21.58 percent of votes. In Maharashtra, INC won 141 seats out of the 276 seats in the state Assembly election of 1990. However, it had secured 20 more seats in the 1985 Assembly Election. In Gujarat, the Congress party had suffered a setback. It won 33 seats in the Assembly election of 1990. In the Assembly election of 1990 the state had voted mostly for a non- Congress alternative- the Janata Dal which had won 70 seats out of 147 seats polling 29.36 percent of votes. BJP secured 67 seats with 26.69 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Therefore, the West too presents a messy picture of the party system thereby not voting for just any single party but for different political force thereby stabilizing the fragmented nature of the Indian party system.

In the state of West Bengal, INC was almost wiped out of the state as it was seen that it was not able to secure a good number of seats. In 1991 the INC had secured just 43 seats out of the 284 seats with 35.12 percent of votes. The state became a bastion for the left party. CPI (M) had emerged victorious in the Assembly election of 1991. It had bagged 189 seats out of the 213 seats with 36.87 percent of votes. In the state election of 1990 to the legislative assembly of Orissa, INC had secured 10 seats and 29.78 percent of votes in 1991 compared to above 50 percent votes in 1985 assembly election whereas JD won 123 seats out of 139 seats polling 53.69 percent of votes. In Bihar as well a trend of decline was noticed in the performance of INC. It was able to win just 71 seats out of the 323 seats, with 24.78 percent of votes. It was Janata Dal which secured 122 seats with 25.61 percent of votes. BJP was able to bag just 39 seats and JMM was able to win just 19 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Assam voted for INC and it bagged 66 seats out of the 125 seats polling 29.35% of votes whereas Assam Gono Parishad (AGP) secured 19 seats out of the 121 seats BJP secured 10 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in). The East as well produced a fragmented picture of the party system by placing different political party in power in each state.

The North-Eastern region was seen to be almost under the reign of a single political party, i.e.; the Indian National Congress (INC). In the State election of 1990 the State of Arunachal Pradesh voted for INC. It had secured the highest number of seats with 37 seats, polling 44.25 percent of votes whereas the Janata Dal was able to secure only 11 seats with 33.34 percent of votes. In Manipur too INC had come to power and fetched for itself 24 seats with 33.71 percent of votes in comparison to 11 seats of Janata Dal with 19.82 percent of votes in the Assembly election of 1990 (http://www.eci.nic.in). In the Nagaland state legislative assembly election of 1989, INC formed the government and had secured 36 seats and Nagaland People's Conference was able to manage 24 seats only. The situation was similar in the state of Mizoram too. In the 1989 Assembly election the Indian National Congress surpassed all the other parties with 23 seats whereas the Mizo National Front was able to secure 14 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in). Despite of intensive attempt to provide India with a non-Congress government it was seen that the North-Eastern region voted in favour of the Congress party. However, in the North- Eastern region, Tripura was an aberration. The CPI (M) emerged victorious by securing 44 seats. In the assembly

election of 1993, INC secured only 10 seats which was fifteen less than 1988 assembly election (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The trend of fragmentation persisted even after the 10th Lok Sabha election, 1991.[17]In Uttar Pradesh, BJP gave a remarkable performance in the Hindi Heartland and came to power by securing 221 seats out of the 415 seats with 31.45 percent of votes. INC could not do well. It could bag just 46 seats out of the 413 seats that it had contested for with 17.32 percent of votes. Similarly, the1993 state election to the National Capital Territory of Delhi also saw BJP emerging victorious with 49 seats out of the 70 seats polling 42.82 percent of votes and INC could bag just 14 seats with 34.48 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). However, Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh had INC-led governments in power with their respective state elections to their legislative assemblies. Although, north voted consistently to a great extent, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh remained an aberration.

On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu it was ADMK, the regional party of the state, which had emerged victorious. It had secured 164 seats out of 168 seats with 44.39 percent of votes. INC had contested 65 seats and won 60 seats with 15.19 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic). Kerala voted in favour of INC with the 1991 assembly election and it secured 55 seats of the 91 seats polling 32.07% of votes whereas CPM bagged only 28 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Karnataka with the state election of 1994 brought Janata Dal in power with 115 seats polling 33.54% of seats and BJP could fetch only 40 seats for itself (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the State Election of 1994 to the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh the people of the state voted in favour of Telegu Desam Party, a state-based party to power with an overwhelming number of 216 seats of the 251 seats that it had contested for polling 44.46 percent of votes and INC could bag just 26 seats of the 294 seats with 23.85 % of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The South voted in a highly fragmented manner by choosing different party for each of its state.

Rajasthan following the 1993 assembly polls placed BJP at the state helm with 95 seats of 196 seats with 38.60percent of votes whereas INC could bag just 76 seats of

[17] In the 10th Lok sabha election,1991 the Congress (I) had secured 232 seats out of the 487 seats that it had contested for with 36.26 percent of votes. JD was able to win 59 seats out of 308 seats with 11.84 percent of votes. Janata Party could bag just 5 seats (www.eci.nic.in). However, with each successive election it was seen that BJP was improving its position. With 10th general election, 1991 it had increased its number of seats from 85 to 120 seats with 20.11 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in).

the 199 seats polling 38.27percent of votes and Janata Dal could fetch for itself abysmally low number of just 6 seats and 6.99 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Similarly, Gujarat with the 1995 assembly polls too voted BJP to power in the state with 121 seats of the 182 seats with 42.51% of votes. INC stood distant second with 45 seats polling 32.86 percent of votes. The state of Maharashtra with the 1995 assembly polls however opted for INC which secured 80 seats with 31.00 percent of votes and BJP had secured 65 seats of the 286 seats polling 12.86 percent of votes. Madhya Pradesh with its 1993 assembly polls saw INC emerging victorious with 174 seats of the 318 seats polling 40.67 percent of seats and BJP could bag just 117 seats of the 318 seats polling 38.82 percent of seats (http://www.ecinic.in). Hence, it can be fairly concluded that West voted in a fragmented pattern.

In West Bengal State Assembly polls of 1991 the CPI (M) had emerged victorious with 189 seats out of 213 seats with 36.87 percent of votes in contrast to the 43 seats of the Congress (http://www.eci.nic.in). Orissa following its 1995 state election placed INC at the state helm with 80 seats polling 39.08 percent of seats. Bihar voted in favour of Janata Dal by bestowing 167 seats of the 264 seats polling 27.98 percent of votes whereas BJP could bag just 41 seats and INC won only 29 seats in the 1995 State Election to the Legislative Assembly of Bihar (http://www.eci.nic.in). Similarly, east too portrays a trend of fragmentation in its voting pattern thereby creating a fragmented party system.

With the Eleventh Lok Sabha general election the Congress (I) was again ousted out from power. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with 161 seats and 20.29 percent of votes failed to muster a majority in the hung Parliament (http://www.eci.nic.in). BJP and its allies could manage to accumulate 194 seats which were far away from the 272 seats needed to prove its majority (http://www.eci.nic.in). BJP failed to enter into any coalitional arrangement required to come to power. Based on its performance during the last three elections BJP has established itself as a formidable political formation. BJP was then increasingly emerging as an alternative to Congress (I) as the latter was not able to project itself as a performing and pro-people government. The image of the Congress party and its leaders were getting tainted with charges of

corruption and scandals[18]. The BJP was in power for two weeks after which the President had offered the Janata Dal-led United Front (UF) to form a government at the centre. The formation of UF was a post election development. The Janata Dal bagged only 46 seats in the election but it with its various allies such as Samajwadi Party, Asom Gana Parishad, DMK, etc. came to form a coalitional government at the centre under the Prime Ministership of Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda. The Congress party extended legislative support to the UF government from outside. The Congress with just 140 seats out of the 529 seats and with 28.80 percent of votes could not form a government on its own at the centre (http://www.eci.nic.in).

Coalitional politics had by then already cemented its base along with some other developments such as there was a shrink in the support base of the Congress party accompanied by continuous improvement of BJP in terms of support base and electoral gains. BJP was able to secure its support base in the Hindi speaking states, Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka and Gujarat.

In the meantime the regional parties had already expanded their bases in their respective states and were in fact allying with national parties to enable them to form government at the centre. The UF were a pact of several parties comprising of centrist, leftist and several other regional parties. The UF parties despite of their heterogeneous composition were able to maintain their solidarity and togetherness. It even successfully progressed ahead along with the forces of economic liberalization and political federalization of the system of governance. The UF parties, unlike the National Front or the Janata Party, were able to deal efficiently with internal dissensions and personality clashes and it never came in the way of the functioning of the government (Singh, 2001, p.347).[19] It was the role of the Congress party which had created disruption in the functioning of the government; firstly, with regard to change of Prime Ministership from Deve Gowda to I. K. Gujral by using its veto power in April 1977. Secondly, by withdrawing its support from the government

[18] A series of corruption charges against the cabinet minister of the Rao-led government such as the sugar scam, the urea scandal and the alleged bribing of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha MPs by the Congress Party to gain support to manage majority in the Lok Sabha.

[19] Weak coordination squabbles and fragmented way of functioning had weakened the National Front coalition government.

which led to the collapse of the United Front government in November 1997, precipitating fresh elections in February – March 1998[20].

The 1998 general election was held in a different context – the essence of the Congress party had already lost its vigor and vitality, BJP was gradually emerging as a political force to reckon in a period when no single party was able to consolidate its base and offer a stable, performance-oriented government. Since the nineties some other significant changes have occurred in Indian Politics which has led to glaring transformations in the Indian party system. The changes are; rise and stabilization of coalition politics, growth of regionalization of Indian politics and politics based on identity i.e. along the lines of caste, class, community or religion. Though since the late 1960s and more particularly since late nineties the main flank of politics in India has been 'opposition to the dominant Congress party' but the policies and plan of actions of all the parties were similar i.e. it had to respond to the socio-economic and cultural demands.

As several crises such as food crisis, droughts, inflation had hardly jeopardized the life of the people of an already underdeveloped nation during the late 1960s, therefore the ability of the government, ruling both at the Centre as well as in the states, to deliver governance to the people in terms of health, nutrition, education, national security etc. become the major criteria for survival. There was gradual awakening of Indian masses. They were becoming conscious of their rightful claims and became more articulate and demanding. The political parties coming to power and the political institutions succumbed to these increasing pressures from society. They in most cases failed to deliver as promised or was expected. The Janata Party could not continue to be in power and was ousted from power. Congress (I) replaced it because it could not contribute anything significant towards the development of the nation. On the contrary it was found to be riddled with inner rivalries and factionalism (Dasgupta, 1979). Gradually all the political parties were losing credibility in the eyes of these conscious masses. Hence with every election the people started giving fractured verdict when no party gained absolute majority in the Parliament leading to the crystallization of coalition politics where several parties forged post electoral or pre-electoral alliances to come to power. Even at the state level we saw that no party

[20] Congress withdrew support to the UF cabinet because the Jain Commission reported that DMK was quiet alive about the conspiracy to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi.

was able to provide a stable rule in a state for a long period. In Andhra Pradesh, Telegu Desam Party could not perform as was expected well on the contrary it had slipped into huge fiscal deficit and therefore had to bring moderation in its welfare programmes. Neither was Assam Gana Parishad able to prove itself a success in the state of Assam. In many of the state's two party coalitions came to power such as during the 1990s BJP and Janata Dal Coalition came to power in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Hence no party received absolute vote of the Indian electorate which proves the incompetence of these political parties and the growing consciousness of the Indian masses towards the logic of electoral politics. They reminded the politicians that they exist to serve the interest of the people and not their self-interest.

Meanwhile, it was the Bharatiya Janata Party which was trying to fill up the vacuum by trying to win over the masses by resorting to various strategies.[21] It embarked upon the notion of Hindutva to win over the heart of Hindu community, proposed to construct a Rama Temple on the site of the Babri Masjid, promised to repeal Art. 370 (special autonomous status for Kashmir) and assured to promulgate a common civil code, promised to impose ban on cow slaughter and such various other promises (Roy, 1999, p.203).[22] BJP went into alliances with various other state-based parties, and contested election with pre-election allies including two Independents.

Reasons for the Demise of Congress (I) and Rise of alternatives (1984-2004)

The Hindu card that was first played by the Congress (I) to save itself from demise following the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom was cashed in by the Bhratiya Janata Party (BJP) that facilitated its rise to power through several instances or fallout of Congress which includes the *Shah Bano case* of 1986 where Congress was accused of minority appeasement. Rajiv Gandhi's decision to reverse the Supreme Court order to ensure maintenance to Muslim divorced women by their estranged husband and allow to abide by the Muslim custom of remaining devoid of such maintenances by enacting

[21] BJP had a Hindu nationalist character. The basic tenet of Hindu nationalism is that India is basically a Hindu nation. It was anti-Muslim and treated Christians as aliens. It believed in Gandhian socialism, democracy, nationalism, positive secularism, national integration and value-based politics. The Jana Sangh was the predecessor of BJP.

[22] To BJP promulgation of a uniform civil code for all Indians is the only way to restore integrity and achieve equality.

the Muslim Women's Act, 1986 maligned the image of the Congress party (Hindu, 2003). This decision invited criticism from women organisation for being gender insensitive[23] as well as from the Hindus, the majority community of the nation for getting over indulged with the minority politics as well as compromising with its secular image by pampering the conservative Muslim laws, its leaders and clerics. Rajiv Gandhi during his tenure as the Prime Minister had faltered in all his efforts to deliver 'able governance'; the most significant was his initiative to meddle with the issues relating to the religious minority communities. Another such political blunder was reopening the gates of the *Babri Masjid* (mosque) in Ayodhya to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) members for laying the foundation stone for the Rama temple on the disputed site in Ayodhya[24]. Rajiv Gandhi government (which was earlier accused of minority appeasement) expected to garner the Hindu support with this decision because Lord Rama was a Hindu god. However, the decision proved to be a boomerang because BJP and VHP took the credit for forcing the central and the state government to bend to their wishes of opening the gates of the disputed site for the

[23] All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) organised demonstrations by Muslims women for reversing the Supreme order by the Rajiv Gandhi led central government. *See* 1985: Shah Bano Case, www.indiatoday.intoday.in. (Accessed on 19 June, 2016 at 09:45 pm).

[24] Ayodha dispute is thus a politically, socio-religiously and historically relevant issue. The issue is centered on the plot in a city called Ayodhya in the Faizabad district, Uttar Pradesh. The main issue revolves around access to a site traditionally regarded as the birthplace of Hindu god Rama or called as the Ramjanambhoomi. It is 2.77 acres of land. But it is held that on this site originally existed the Babri Mosque which was built in 1528 by Mir Baqi Khan, general of Babur who had occupied a substantial part of Northern India. Mir Baqi named the mosque Babri Masjid. It is the largest mosque in U.P with 31 million Muslims. However the Hindu claimed the site was the birthplace of Ram. The mosque remained unused for a very long period till the middle of the 20th century. An idol of Ram was placed inside the mosque silently at night of 22/23 December, 1949. Vishwa Hindu Parishad made a claim over the land in 1984 who wanted to erect a temple dedicated to Lord Rama. Some Hindus believed that the mosque was built after a temple was demolished. In the late 1940s the mosque was locked up as the matter was with the court. But in 1986 it was unlocked by an order by the Faizabad district court so that the Hindus could offer prayer at the site. As soon as the lock was opened mobilisation started on both sides. Many Hindus and Muslim organisation tried to mobilise their communities over this issue. Gradually this issue took an accentuated form and became a national issue. As the site was restored to the Hindus with full effect with the 1989 Allahabad High Court Order this galvanized the Hindu-Muslim tensions. This gave birth to the Ayodhya dispute. Archeological Survey of India in 1970, 1992, 2003 found that the disputed site have evidence indicating that a large Hindu complex existed on the site. Beneath the mosque ASI found that after the excavations remains of stone, decorated bricks, lotus motifs, pillars built in the style of Indian architecture were found. The judgment was based on faith, belief, the two unconventional medium adopted by judiciary to give its verdict. Verdict was given by Justice Dharam Veer Sharma, Sudhir Agarwal and Sibghat Ullah Khan.On 6th Dec. 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 Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad. On 16 Dec., 1992 the Liberhan Commission was set up by the GOI to probe the circumstances that led to the demolition of the Babri masjid.

ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the construction of Lord Rama temple. BJP made it a major electoral and political issue to create its vote bank among the Hindus. RSS and VHP too were part of this process. The BJP in order to generate a public support for itself over this issue took out a massive march called *Rathyatra* from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh during the 1990s. This surged the popularity of the party among the Hindu electoral base. BJP henceforth gained substantially in the Lok Sabha and assembly polls. The Muslims too deserted the Congress for its inaction for not being able to impose President's rule in the state to prevent the demolition of *Babri* mosque by the *Karsevaks.* The *Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid* massacre led to absolute downfall of the Congress party in the state of Uttar Pradesh coupled with the charges of inaction on the part of the Narshima Rao-led Congress (I) government at the union level (Jafferelot, 2007, p.296). Earlier, Rajiv Gandhi was criticized as a political novice who came to power due to sympathy but had no potential for leadership for he lacked political insights, vision and intellect.

Following the demolition of *Babri Masjid* (mosque) on December 6th, 1992 riots broke out in Mumbai during December 1992 and January 1993 due to communal inciting propaganda by Hindu communal organisations for flaring up the 'Being Hindu' feeling. This incident further invited danger for the Congress party and added as another reason for inviting public wrath and disapproval. The Srikrishna Commission was constituted to investigate the Bombay Riot and it revealed that the then ruling Congress(I) led state government headed by Sudhakarrao Naik acted very inactively to control the riot and was accused of giving insufficient orders to police forces for controlling the raging mobs and the fanatic communal violence. The report even suggested that the Congress (I)-led Naik government had even made the mistake of doing undue delay in using Army for controlling the communal riot (Padmanabhan, Frontline, 1998). Besides, the hawala scam that involved receiving large sum of money by politicians through four hawala brokers, the Jain Brothers disclosed names of national level leaders like Madhavrao Scindia, V.C Shukla, Kamalnath and Arvind Netam who were associated with the Congress party further jeopardized the electoral fortune of the party and contributed positively towards BJP's electoral fate.

Further, with the rise in lower caste mobilization with the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report by the V.P Singh government BJP-RSS-VHP combine could intensify its strategy to play the *Hindu* card to gain electorally and widen its

support base. The report of the Mandal Commission recommended 27 percent reservation of posts for non-creamy layer of the *OBCs* (Other backward castes) in central government jobs. The Report invited serious protests from the upper caste section of the society as it affected their prospect in the job market where the politics through reservation was outweighing merit. The upper caste section of the society resorted to various forms of outrages which included self-immolation, road blockade, shut down of schools, colleges, government offices, business and transport services. They even constituted new organistions such as Arakshan Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti or the Mandal Ayog Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti, etc. to voice their opinion on the trend of caste politics (Jaffrelot, 2000, p.97). This galvanized a *process*, i.e.; politics based on caste that set upper or forward caste against the lower caste. BJP traditionally derived its support from the upper-caste, urban Hindus, small and middle businessmen and Hindu traders, cultivators, etc (Hansen & Jaffrelot, 2001, p.4.) This led to the creation of a new vote bank comprising of upwardly mobile backward castes, Dalits, Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeris, etc. and also enabled rise of many other identity-based parties such as Samajwadi party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), etc. that had also facilitated erosion of Congress support base in the Hindi Heartland states such as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Congress was not able to come up with or promise any policies or packages for the otherwise deprived regions or for the ethnic minorities (Hasan, 2007, p.87). Hence, since 1989 we saw there was rise of BJP and regional as well as caste based anti-Congress parties which were mostly representing the backward and the Scheduled Castes. The parties have garnered support for themselves by exploiting their sentiments and at the expense of the Congress. The Bahujan Samaj party, a dalit based party in Uttar Pradesh claimed itself to be the representative of the socially, economically and politically undermined Dalits. As says Hasan, "The heightened caste and communal competition provoked by the combined effect of Hindutva and Mandal, has radically changed the social map of politics" (Hasan, 2007, p.86).

Congresses' Populist Measures to Retain Bases

The Congress too did not fall behind. To be a part of the race it prepared itself to face the Twelfth General Lok Sabha election. It started with its election campaign and published its election manifesto. The Indian National Congress through its manifesto

appealed to the people of India to vote for Congress. It described BJP's attempt to form the government at the centre in May 1996 as a 'pathetic attempt' and as a sheer 'political adventurism'. To it the United Front was just an alliance of some opportunistic political parties which had failed to provide a stable rule, sustained governance and had subverted Indian democracy (AICC:1998).

Hence the Congress had expressed its intention to bring back stability which would mean improvement in the living condition of all, growth and social harmony. It had also promised to uphold and sustain secularism to save plurality of Indian society and democracy. It emphatically declared to ensure economic, political and social justice once brought back to power. It had assured to revive the agricultural sector and give it a status of industry. A massive programme for creating rural infrastructure was to be launched once in power along with emphasis on land reforms, increased flow of credit to farmers, improving irrigational facilities, etc (AICC:1998).

Congress had also vowed to generate employment opportunities by creating new jobs and providing vocational training. It had expressed its desire to solve all the problems of insurgency and militancy in the North east region and equip them with greater funds and financial powers. The party had rigidly declared that illegal infiltration into the region will be dealt with heavy hand. Efforts to ensure development of the regions were assured by the party. It had promised to ensure that all needy and poor would have access to the public distribution system and had vowed to implement poverty alleviation programmes to eradicate poverty (AICC: 1998).

The special groups too found a mention in the manifesto of 1998. The Congress continued to provide a special space to the minorities and had vowed to ensure their social, economic advancement and ensure that their personal law remains untouched. The Congress had univocally announced that the party had decided to abide by the decision and ruling of the Supreme Court on Ayodhya Dispute Case. It had even claimed to ensure that the existing policy on reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in jobs and education will be implemented fully. The Congress had also stated its intention to be in the forefront of every campaign to combat atrocities on women, like sati, dowry deaths and every other social evil and initiate programmes of education, empowerment and provision of legal rights for them (AICC:1998).

Amidst severe charges of corruption upon several important Congress leaders the party unleashed its intention to make the administration responsive and accountable and take up measures to clean the administration and restore the pro-people image of the administration. It had also decided to herald remarkable changes with the implementation of Fifth Pay Commission. The Congress had also promised to revive the existing policy with regard to Official Secrets' Act and make administration more transparent. It had even decided to gear up and better up centre-state relations and ensure that the Inter State Council and National Development Council function properly to sort out issues (AICC, 1998, pp.16-54). Through its several plan of action and programmes, it appealed to the people of India to vote for the party for stability and development.

However, nothing could save the party from the wrath of the common masses and it failed to emerge victorious in the twelfth general election. It had secured just 141 seats out of 477 seats with 25.82 percent of votes. On the contrary, the Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as an alternative and a viable option for the people of India. It won 182 seats out of the 388 that it had contested for with 25.59 percent of votes whereas Janata Dal secured only 6 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The allies of BJP secured 76 seats, amounting to 258 seats as a whole polling 37.1 percent of votes for the alliance (Hasan, 2003, p.488).

State wise too BJP fared well. It won large number of seats in almost all the states except in Haryana (where Congress secured 21 seats in comparison of 6 seats of BJP), Maharashtra (Congress won 75 seats and BJP won 56 seats only) and Rajasthan (Congress won 153 seats and BJP secured 33 seats only). BJP gave its best ever performance in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka and Punjab and also with the state Assembly election for West Bengal BJP secured its first ever seat in the state. BJP marginalized Congress even in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat (http://www.eci.nic.in).

However, Congress retained its position in Andhra Pradesh as in the Assembly election following the 1998 Lok Sabha election it bagged 91 seats, polling 40.61 percent of votes in comparison to the 12 seats secured by BJP. Even in Assam it was seen that Congress came back to power with 71 seats whereas AGP, the prime regional party of the state secured only 20 seats and BJP bagged only 8 seats. Even in Delhi, Congress could hold on to the reign of power with 52 seats in comparison to

the 15 seats of the BJP. In Madhya Pradesh too Congress emerged victorious with 172 seats polling 40.59 percent of votes whereas BJP won only 119 seats with 39.28 percent (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it was evident that the dominance of Congress had already declined by then as it was ousted out from power at the centre. Even in almost all the states BJP fared remarkably in terms of seats and in certain cases in terms of votes too. Moreover, in most of the states it was seen that the regional parties were gaining prominence and were coming to acquire power in their respective states as was seen in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and some such other states of India. The party system did not shed its fragmented nature. The 1998 Lok Sabha exhibited pronounced regionalization. Moreover, with the 1998 Lok Sabha election the breakdown of Congress system became more evident and pronounced and provided an opportunity for the BJP to emerge as a possible alternative and the staunchest opponent to the Indian National Congress in the centre.

The BJP-led alliance under the Prime Ministership of Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee assumed office on 19th March, 1998. It accommodated within its fold some important state-based political parties like the Telegu Desam Party, the Trinamul Congress, the AIADMK, the Shiv Sena, Samata Party in Bihar, Haryana Vikas Party, Biju Janata Dal, Akali Dal (Badal), Lok Shakti Party etc. All the parties provided their support to the BJP led minority government. However, it was Jayalalitha of AIADMK who was a constant threat for the government. BJP had to cope up with the tantrums thrown by the autocratic AIADMK supreme. Dissensions also were seen to have existed with other alliance partners like Samata Party and Akali Dal who expressed their grievances over the 'Big brother' attitude of the BJP and they also complained of not being consulted on major issues like creation of new states like Uttaranchal, Women Reservation Bill etc. There was dispute between Lok Shakti Party and the BJP over seat sharing for the legislative assembly election. Moreover, the debacle of BJP in Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan increased the rift within and invited criticism from the coalitional partners (Chander, 2004, p.55). But the biggest blow came from the AIADMK when it joined hands with the Congress and deserted the BJP-led coalition government on various issues of differences. The BJP-led government lost the confidence motion by one vote and this sealed the fate of the government. The Thirteenth Lok Sabha election was declared which was to be held in September-

October 1999 until then the BJP-led government continued as a caretaker government (Chander, 2004, pp.61-62).

Three national elections between the period 1996 till 1999 and five votes of 'no confidence' indicate a high level of political instability. Indian political system was marked by a series of political crises and elections. Growth of regional parties and breakdown of a dominant party system followed by inability on the part of any political party to secure absolute majority in the Parliament and 'deliver as promised' were the prime reasons behind the frequent toppling of government and the unstable political system.

The Reconfiguration in the Map of Indian Politics since 1999

A BJP-led alliance of twenty four parties based on a broad coalitional strategy was constructed in the form of an alliance system known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) headed by Vajpayee. It was a conglomeration of 'catch-all' political parties (Wallace & Roy, 2003, p.1). The NDA comprised of regional parties based on caste, language, religion, geography such as the Telegu Desam Party, the Shiv Sena, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), and the National Conference from Kashmir, All India Trinamool Congress, the Indian National Lok Dal, the Biju Janata Dal and the Janata Dal (U). The DMK was a new entrant into the NDA. Hence, it is evident that the NDA was an alliance of ideologically disparate political parties. The inability on the part of any political party to gain absolute majority in the parliament led to the formation of such an alliance and this ultimately cemented the base of coalitional politics in India.

The Congress (I) did not form an alliance and hence there was no Congress-led alliance at the national level.[25] However, at the state level it entered into few electoral alliances. Congress was of the opinion that coalition will not work at the centre. With the hope to provide a cohesive government at the centre Congress initiated its campaign for the 1999 election and published its 100 page manifesto on August 13, 1999. It appealed to the people of India to vote for a 'stable' and 'able' government.

[25] The Congress party then did not approved on the idea of allying with other political parties because of its inhibitions and reservation about coalition politics and perhaps because of its inexplicable predominant role in Indian politics. However in the long run due to its downfall it was compelled to endorse coalitional support.

To it the coalitional government of BJP was a disaster for the country because it was ideologically and principally an incoherent government which was a complete failure with the task of governance.

The BJP-led government was accused of not being able to ensure faster economic growth, redress the problem of fiscal deficit, and enhance and ensure social justice to the people. Neither during its rule was it able to provide a secure and stable government nor was it able to generate employment opportunities. Congress vociferously had accused the government for conducting nuclear explosion without considering the dire consequences for it. It criticized the government for the Kargil War and its inability to provide a secured environment.

The prime issue on which the Congress emphasized was the issue of 'political stability and experience'. They were the old repetitive promises of Congress which casted almost no impact on people's minds. The manifesto had promised to promote secularism, rejected and had condemned the strategy of mobilization by stirring up religious passions and sentiments. It had promised to continue to be sensitive towards the underprivileged and deprived sections of the society and provide them with access to education, health and employment facilities. It expressed its commitment towards its policies of reservation to end discrimination and hence lay the foundation of an egalitarian society (AICC: 1999).

The manifesto had also reflected the intention to strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions to bring the government closer to the people and make it more responsive and accountable. It had also promised to double the annual expenditure on poverty alleviation and social development as well as take the nation out from the perils of economic downfall owing to the series of unstable government which have retarded the economic growth of the country. It had pledged to make the country self-reliant during its tenure in office and had promised to invest more in primary education, agriculture, irrigation, public health, water supply, sanitation and in infrastructure building. It had also promised to create a hundred lakh jobs per year and aimed at having at least one member of every family to be in regular employment. New jobs in other areas of rural development will also be encouraged followed by thrust on growth of labour intensive industries (AICC: 1999).

To usher economic growth and social transformation, Congress had promised to resort to 'planning' for promoting balanced regional development as well as mobilize resources for poorer regions. The problem of insurgency and militancy in the North Eastern region will be dealt with heavy hands including speedy all round development of the region, vowed the party. Illegal infiltration would also be checked were some of the other promises of the party. They had expressed its intention to ensure peace and development for the Jammu and Kashmir region through the process of dialogue and discussion. It had vowed to go for administrative reforms to make public administration more effective as well as take up initiatives to pass the Lok Pal bill as early as possible. It had also promised to initiate a crusade against corruption and also ensure to cleanse the entire process of election to reduce the influence of money and muscle power and check criminalization of politics at all levels (AICC, 1999, pp.1-100). Hence it presented a plethora of policies programmes and plan of action before the nation through the manifesto with the hope and desire to serve the people for a full term.

Even the National Democratic Alliance did not lag behind and chalked out its promises and plan of action and released its manifesto on August 16, 1999. The BJP led- NDA came up with the National Agenda for Governance which would become the basis of its governance and vowed to ensure if voted to power national security, national reconstruction, federal harmony, economic modernization, secularism, social justice through empowerment of weaker sections and gender rights, probity through transparency and corruption free governance. It also vowed to provide stable and able government and rejuvenate national economy, eradicate unemployment, ensure food security for all, improve infrastructure, eradicate illiteracy, ensure housing for all, ensure 33 percent reservation of seats for women in Parliament and state assemblies, enact Lok Pal Bill, etc (http://www.bjp.org/en/documents/manifesto/nda-agenda-for-a-proud-prosperous-india-lok-sabha-1999) .

The NDA emerged victorious and Congress was reduced to the position of opposition party with the 13th Lok Sabha, 1999. BJP alone won 182 seats out of the 339 seats with 23.75 percent of votes. On the other hand Congress (I) bagged only 114 seats out of the 453 seats that it had contested for polling 28.30 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). The number of seats secured by Congress (I) in fact had suffered a decline by 27 seats but there was an increase of 3 percent in the voting

percentage. The Congress with its allies could secure just 137 seats which was very low from the required number of seats. The NDA won 305 seats of the 537 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The NDA won a more comprehensive victory. The verdict for 1999 general election was precise and prominent. The nation voted in favour of a non-Congress alternative. Hence the thirteenth Lok Sabha election was largely a contest between fronts and alliances when no party singularly was able to secure an absolute majority. The endeavor of the Bharatiya Janata Party to emerge as the alternative to Congress (I) actually got materialized with the thirteenth Lok Sabha election in 1999 when the BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came to power. It had several regional parties as its allies namely the Shiv Sena, Shiromani Akali Dal, DMK, etc. signifying the growing trend of fragmentation of the Indian party system. This resulted towards growth of incoherent government at the central level as well. Thus, the era of coalition politics remained the order of the day and a significant component of the Indian party system.

Despite of its earlier failed attempts the BJP-led alliance was able to come back to power. It appeared that the people of India were not able to forgive the Congress party for its insincerity and its inability to provide proper governance to its people in the former years. The allegation of frequent involvement in cases of corruption and series of scandals has actually jeopardized the electoral fate of Congress party. The Congress party lost the 1999 general election to the then rising BJP. It in fact, won the lowest number of seats (114 MPs only). It emerged victorious only in Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra assembly elections in 1999.

Even at the State level the trend of fragmentation remained undisturbed. In the state assembly election to the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1999 it was seen that Congress stood distant second. The Bharatiya Janata Party had secured only 12 seats. Congress won 91 seats. It was the Telegu Desam Party, a state based political party of Andhra Pradesh which had emerged victorious in the state. It bagged 180 seats polling 43.87 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). It is the increasing neglect and insensitivity to regional demands relating to language and cultural identity, political autonomy, economic development and the issue of religion led to the rise and consolidation of the regional parties such as the DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, National Conferencein Jammu and Kashmir, Assam Gana Parishad in Assam

and various other parties in the North– Eastern regions as such as the Mizo National Front in Mizoram, Nagaland Peoples' Conference in Nagaland.

Following the 2002 Assembly Election to the state of Uttar Pradesh, it was seen that Congress won 25 seats out of 402 seats contested polling only 8.96 percent of votes. BJP won 88 seats and BSP 98 seats. It was Samajwadi Party (SP), a state based party which emerged victorious in the state with 143 seats out of 390 seats with 25.37 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Punjab in 2002 state assembly polls the story was different. Here INC won the largest number of seats. It won 62 seats out of 105 seats polling 35.81 percent of votes whereas Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) won only 41 seats out of the 92 seats with 31.08 percent of votes. BJP won only three seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Bihar, 2000 Assembly election it was the state based political party, RJD had emerged victorious with 124 seats and 28.34 percent. INC secured a very low number of seats in the state. It secured 23 seats with 11.06 percent of votes whereas BJP bagged only 67 seats for itself. Hence, it is pretty well discernible that the North voted in a fragmented pattern by not opting for any single political party (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In the South, Congress had emerged victorious only in Kerala and Karnataka. In the 1999 Assembly election to the state of Karnataka, Congress won 132 seats out of 222 seats polling 40.84 percent of votes whereas BJP secured only 44 seats out of 146 with 20.69 percent of votes. In Kerala too INC won 62 seats, BJP drew a blank and CPI (M) bagged just 23 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Tamil Nadu, 2001 Assembly Election it was AIADMK which surpassed all the other parties in the state. It won 132 seats out of 141 seats polling 31.44 percent. Congress contested only for 14 seats and won 7 seats with 2.48 percent of votes. The state of Congress in Tamil Nadu was precarious. BJP won only 4 seats and DMK a long time ruling party of the state won only 31 seats with 30.92 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Andhra Pradesh Telegu Desam party emerged victorious with 180 seats of the 269 seats polling 43.87 percent of votes. Congress bagged 91 seats and BJP 12 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). South as well produced a picture of fragmented state party system.

Even in Rajasthan Congress could not emerge victorious and stood defeated in the hands of BJP which secured 120 seats polling 39.20 percent of votes. INC secured only 56 seats with 35.65 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Gujarat too the BJP won the assembly election of 2002 by bagging 127 seats with 49.85 percent of

votes. INC could secure just 51 seats and 39.28 percent of votes. However, in Maharashtra INC retained its base with assembly election of 1999. INC won 75 seats and 27.20 percent of votes and BJP secured 56 seats out of 117 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Madhya Pradesh similarly voted for INC bestowing it with 172 seats of the 316 seats and 40.59 percent of votes. Hence, signs of fragmentation can be as well traced in the West.

In the East trend of fragmentation was evident. INC won only 26 seats. It was BJD which had emerged victorious following the 2000 Assembly election in Orissa with 68 seats polling 29.40 percent of votes. BJP could win only 38 seats. Even in West Bengal, INC won only 26 seats with 7.98 percent of votes. CPI (M) won the 2001 Assembly election with 143 seats out of 211 seats polling 36.59 percent of votes. AITC won only 60 seats whereas BJP drew a blank. Even in Tripura CPI (M) surpassed INC by winning 25 more seats than it. CPI (M) secured 38 seats and INC 13 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in).

However, in the North Eastern region the performance of INC was far better as it had emerged victorious in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur by securing 21 seats, 53 seats and 20 seats respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in). Thus, at the centre the Congress was ousted out from power by a non-Congress alternative. The states too voted in a fragmented pattern considering into account their own state-specific interests.

The BJP-led NDA government which was in power at the centre since 1999 by dislodging the Rao-led Congress (I) government was able to continue for a little over four years. BJP had successfully executed the task of governance in several areas while leading the coalitional government at the centre during 1999-2004. It had implemented and continued with the economic policies of globalization, privatization, and liberalization. The government had also made new laws to attract foreign investors (Bhambri, 2007, p.197). During Vajpayee's tenure the economy was seen to have been reviving with Gross Domestic Product rising at the rate of 8.4 percent (Sharma, 2004, p.33). The government had claimed that its policies had stirred up a 'feel good' factor in the country. Moreover, to add one more feather to its cap it had highlighted to competence in completing its term. It claimed that it was able to prove that coalitional government can survive and sustain at the centre. Besides it had even claimed to have ushered a connective revolution throughout India and undertake a

second round of green revolution throughout the rural India (Sharma, 2004, p.35). Major initiatives had been taken to ensure food security through 'concessional ration facility, expansion of Antyodaya Anaj Yojana, at subsidized rates food grains were provided to the poor children and for mid-day meals (Sharma, 2004, pp.53-53). Mr. Vajpayee even dreamt of making India a 'developed' nation by 2020. It even took measures to ensure facilities for drinking water, irrigation, better sanitation facilities along with its initiatives to provide 'housing for all' by 2010. Despite of all these efforts (of which only few have been discussed) the BJP-led NDA alliance was not able to repeat its term.

Reasons of Debacle of the 1999-2004 BJP-led NDA Combine

The main reason for the debacle of the BJP-led NDA combine can be attributed to the reason that 'India shining' and the 'feel good factor' did not pay any dividends for BJP. In reality, the employment has not increased but had decreased; panchayati raj had failed to realize its real meaning during NDA rule. It was accused of spreading violence and hatred among various communities by organization like Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) wrecking the social harmony. The Godhra massacre[26] of Gujarat in 2002 became the most important reason for its debacle which left a deep scare in people's mind. It had made gross violation of human rights. It had weakened its bases by inciting violence against missionaries and had instigated the common masses to wage communal riots in the country and had thus destabilized the social harmony of the nation. Its link with RSS further maligned its position (Sharma, 2004, pp.90-91). It failed to tread the path of secularism. Besides, in 2001 the image of NDA government got tainted with numerous scandals such as *Tehelka.com* which revealed Defence officials and BJP party chairman, Bangaru Lakshman accepted a bribe of Rs.100,000 crore from a Defence supply company following which George Fernandes, the then Defence Minister had to resign. The Opposition moved no-confidence motion over the Tehelka.com scam. Mr. Frenandes was re-inducted into the cabinet even before he was exonerated by Tehelka Commission of Inquiry by the

[26] In 27th Feb-March 2002 large scale violence took place in Gujarat at a station called Godhra. This incident was known as the Godhra massacre. A bogey of train of Sabarmati express carrying the *Karsevaks* returning from Ayodhya was set on fire .N early about 60 people died. Violence continued for a month.

Prime Minister. The BJP-led NDA government won the no-confidence motion by 312 votes. Bahujan Samaj Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Telegu Desam Party, Shiv Sena voted in favour of the NDA coalition government[27]. In addition to it, the Coffingate scandal and the Pumpgate scandal in 2002 further tainted its image which had come to power by promising to ensure through its governance "probity" through transparency and corruption free governance. The NDA partners often alleged BJP of violating the commitments of the National Agenda for Governance (Singh, 2004, pp. 143-146). In 2001 the BJP who vowed by the name of *swadeshi* was witnessed to drastically drift away from the path of *swadeshi* and adopt a pro-liberalized agenda by creating the ministry for Disinvestment (McMillan, 2004, p. 28). During its tenure the Parliament was attacked by terrorists. The National Agenda was violated in the case of education policy as well and instead attempts were made to saffronize the curricular content of education (Lall, 2004, pp.153-168). The Opposition accused it of subverting the secular character of the educational system.

The BJP-led NDA coalition was replaced by the Congress led-UPA regime. The Congress party was able to resurge from its state of decline. However, it did not ensure an absolute rejuvenation or revival of one party dominance by the veteran Congress Party because the Congress came back to head a coalitional form of government at the centre. This marked a virtual end in decline of the dominance by the Indian National Congress. However, the party system remained multi-party in nature with burgeoning influence of the regional parties. Neither did it neither shed off its bipolarized structure nor got the trend of fragmentation reversed.

Congress left no leaf unturned to revive itself from its state of decline. The strategy of *'aam admi'* or its pro-poor policies did the wonder for the party and it was able to resurge from the state of decline. The pro-rich policies of the NDA and the irrelevant 'India Shining' campaign of the NDA and its inability to comply diligently with its poll promises made in the form of the National Agenda for Governance wrested the chance of BJP-led NDA coalition to repeat a term. Sonia Gandhi toiled hard to take the messages of the party across the length and breadth of the country which included some of the prime states such as Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Haryana, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

[27] *"Government defeats no-confidence motion by a big margin"*, The Hindu, August 20, 2003.

A Competitive Fragmented Multi-Party System with the Resurgence of Congress Party (2004-2009)

With the 2004 election a new coalition known as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) with Indian National Congress (INC) as the leading partner came up to acquire the position of the ruling party at the centre along with the outside support of the leftist parties, Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samajwadi Party by its side. Bharatiya Janata Party bagged 138 seats out of 364 seats with 22.16 percent of votes. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress emerged victorious by securing seven more seats. INC bagged 145 seats out of the 417 seats with 26.53 percent of votes in the 2004 Lok Sabha election (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress and its allies together could muster 219 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The assembly elections conducted after the 2004 Lok Sabha polls testifies to the fact that the party system still stood fragmented in nature with numerous state voting distinctively.

In the Southern part of the country the Indian National Congress could emerge victorious only in Andhra Pradesh. With the 2004 Assembly Election to the State of Andhra Pradesh Congress emerged victorious by winning 185 seats out of 234 seats with 38.56 percent of votes. Telegu Desam Party, the state based party could bag just 47 seats out of the 267 seats that it had contested for, polling 37.59 percent of votes whereas BJP secured only two seats (http://wwweci.nic.in). In 2004 State Election to the State Legislature of Karnataka BJP won the election by securing 79 seats out of 198 seats polling 28.33 percent of votes. Indian National Congress could secure 65 seas out of 224 seats with 35.27 percent of votes whereas In Kerala we saw that with the 2006 State Assembly election CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front came back to power with 61 seats in comparison to the 23 seats with 30.45 percent of votes. In Tamil Nadu too DMK emerged victorious with 96 seats out of the 132 seats that it had contested for with 26.46 percent of votes whereas INC won only 34 seats with 8.38 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).Thus the South retained the trend of producing fragmented electoral verdict.

In the North the trend of fragmentation persisted. In the State of Uttar Pradesh following the 2007 assembly election, Bahujan Samaj Party emerged victorious by defeating the then ruling Samajwadi Party (SP) with 206 seats out of 403 polling 30.43 percent of votes. In Punjab, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) came to power by

winning 48 seats with 37.09 percent of votes. INC secured 44 seats with 40.90 percent of votes. BJP could win just 19 seats. In Haryana 2005 Assembly election Congress emerged victorious by winning 67 assembly seats out of the 90 contested seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In the West too the trend of fragmentation was evident with the subsequent assembly polls following the 2004 general election. In Maharashtra INC could secure 69 seats with 21.06 percent of votes in the 2004 assembly election. NCP secured the highest number of seats 71 and the NCP-Congress combine formed coalition government to rule the state. In the 2007 State Assembly election to the state of Gujarat BJP swept the polls by securing 117 seats out of the 182 seats polling 49.12 percent of votes. INC won 59 seats out of 173 seats with 38.00 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The Eastern part of the country maintained the trend of voting in a fragmented pattern. Although the centre had a Congress-led coalition government but still the East passed a fragmented electoral verdict. In the state of West Bengal the CPI (M) swept the 2006 assembly polls with 176 seats, polling 37.13 percent of votes and INC could win 21 seats and BJP drew a blank. With the 2004 Assembly Election to the State of Orissa, the Biju Janata Dal, the state based party of Navin Patnaik, emerged victorious with 61 seats out of the 84 seats polling 27.36 percent of votes. (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Bihar JD (U)-BJP combine came to power by winning 88 seats with 20.46 percent of votes in October 2005 Assembly polls by displacing RJD which had won 75 seats earlier in the February, 2005 Assembly election. BJP secured 55 seats in October 2005 assembly polls (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the 2006 Assembly Election in Assam Congress emerged victorious by winning 53 seats out of the contested 120 seats polling 31.08 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In Arunachal Pradesh the Congress emerged victorious in the 2004 assembly polls by winning 34 seats out of the 60 contested seats with 44.41 percent of votes. In the State Assembly Election 2007 to the Legislative Assembly of Manipur, Congress emerged victorious and won 30 seats out of the 59 seats that it had contested for (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence it was again Congress which swept the assembly polls in Manipur. The Congress emerged as the leading party of a coalitional government at the centre but could not restore uniformity of the Indian party system. The Indian party system remained bifurcated into two levels. The government at the centre

remained heterogeneous in terms of composition. No single party was able to fetch absolute majority for itself due to the fragmented pattern of voting by the electorates. Thus, the majority of the states had non-Congress governments. With the conclusion of 2004 Lok Sabha election the Indian party system largely remained unaltered marked by a competitive fragmented multi-party system. Coalition governments remained as the indispensable form of government in Indian politics but with burgeoning influence and presence of regional and state-based parties at the Centre.

2009 Lok Sabha Election and the Indian Party System

During 2004-2009 the Congress was ruling at the centre as the leading partner of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Since the demise of United Front Government, the Bharatiya Janata Party has remained the main competitor to the Congress (I) for acquiring power at the centre. But with the dawn of 2009 general election the game of politics witnessed some significant reconfiguration. Apart from the BJP-led NDA there emerged two other forces who were equally potential contenders for power and a major political competitor to the then ruling Congress-led UPA. These forces in the form of 'Third Front' which was a motley crowd of the Leftist parties and the 'Fourth Front' which comprised Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal of Lalu Prasad Yadav and some other important political forces became serious contender for power and they expected to emerge victorious as an alternative non-Congress, non-BJP government. Hence the contest for power was four-dimensional in nature. But the election results were full of surprises. The Congress party surpassed all the other parties and emerged as the 'largest party' (though it could not regain the status of a 'Majority party' neither did the party system at the centre reacquired the feature of pre-dominated system) with the 2009 Lok Sabha election. Although INC was short of absolute majority and secured 206 seats of the 440 seats polling 28.55 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress was able to secure some sixty one more seats than it had secured in the 2004 election. The UPA captured 262 seats just 11 seats short of absolute majority. BJP led NDA stood distant second with 159. The third front could bag just 80 seats and the fourth front secured 27 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). It came back to power with the 2009 Lok Sabha election as the leading party of a coalition government for adhering to its pro-people image and also because of its ability to sincerely implement some of its proposed flagship

schemes and populists policies. However, the nation still failed to repose trust on a single party and ended passing fractured verdict that kept the party system fragmented, incoherent and scattered in nature at both the levels.

Even in the assembly polls, following the 2009 general election, the Congress party could leave its mark but the party system still did not achieve a uniform nature and remained bifurcated into two levels with distinct state party systems. In Andhra Pradesh the Congress party got the mandate to rule the state again with the assembly polls of 2009. It won 33 out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats and 157 out of 294 seats in the assembly polls of 2009 (Frontline, Vol. 26. Issue 11; May 23 – Jun. 05, 2009). In Karnataka too INC emerged victorious with the assembly polls of 2013 by bagging 122 seats of the 224 seats polling 36.59 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Tamil Nadu following the 2011 state election AIADMK emerged victorious with 150 seats of the 165 seats polling 38.40 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Kerala with the 2011 assembly polls the Left Democratic Front was displaced by the Congress-led United Democratic Front combine. CPI bagged 13 seats and CPM secured 45 seats whereas INC won only 38 seats. MUL managed to win 20 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence, the trend of fragmentation continued and South had chosen different political outfits for each of its state.

The eastern part of the country as well voted in a fragmented manner. Following the state election of 2011, the state of West Bengal voted for a change and ousted 34 years of Left rule from power and coroneted All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) the opportunity to come to power with a massive mandate of 184 seats of the 226 seats with 38.93 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Assam, INC came to power with 78 seats with 39.39 percent of votes. (http://www.eci.nic.in). Orissa placed Biju Janata Dal, state-based party to power by bestowing it with 103 seats of the 129 seats polling 38.86 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Bihar got swayed away by Nitish wave and installed Janata Dal (United) - BJP combine in power with 115 seats with 22.58 percent of votes. BJP bagged 91 seats and INC secured only 4 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In Gujarat, following the 2013 assembly election, BJP returned to power with 115 seats polling 47.85 percent of votes. In Maharashtra, following the 2009 state election, the Congress secured 82 seats of the 288 assembly seats and has formed the government with its old ally NCP. The latter has bagged 62 seats (The Hindu, Oct.23,

2009). In Madhya Pradesh BJP came back to power for the third consecutive term by fetching 164 seats of the 230 assembly seats and INC could secure just 59 seats (The Hindu, Dec. 9, 2013). BJP thundered the state of Rajasthan with 2013 state election by winning a resounding mandate of 162 seats of the 200 assembly seats (The Hindu, Dec.9, 2013). West displayed some consistency or uniformity in delivering electoral verdict however Maharashtra emerged as an aberration.

In Haryana too the Congress remained the single largest party by winning 40 of the 90 assembly seats (The Hindu, Oct.23, 2009). The Sheila Dixit-led Congress government could not repeat its past glorious performance in the state of Delhi. Besides, being charged with the allegations of corruption following the 2010 commonwealth games, the Congress government also failed to bring in control the rising prices, high power (Sheila Dixit, the former chief minister of Delhi privatized electricity distribution in Delhi) and water rates. Though it was credited with the development of infrastructure, bringing in Delhi Metro, setting up educational institutions, the Congress Party was wiped out with the craze for Aam Admi Party (AAP), the crusader against corruption and evil government and aspirations of the young voters, a majority being first-timers, who turned out in large numbers to cast their votes. Congress had to remain satisfied only with 8 seats with the assembly polls of 2013 whereas BJP bagged 31seats and AAP scored 28 seats. BJP failed to garner required support and refused to form government in a Hung assembly and hence AAP came to form the government in the state with the outside support of Congress party (The Hindu, Dec. 9, 2013). In Uttar Pradesh following the 2012 assembly polls Samajwadi Party of Mulayam Singh Yadav came to power with 224 seats of the 401 seats it had contested for polling 29.13 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence, the North as well voted in a fragmented manner thereby producing a messy picture of the Indian party system which stood bifurcated into two levels - the central and state level.

In Arunachal Pradesh state election, Congress swept the assembly polls and came to power for a second consecutive term. It bagged 42 of the 60 seats with improvement in its performance (The Hindu, Oct. 23, 2009). In Manipur and Meghalaya, INC had a clear sweep over other parties with 42 seats and 29 seats respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Tripura with the state election of 2013 CPI (M) came back to rule the state with 49 seats polling 48.11 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In

Nagaland following the 2013 state election Naga Peoples Front (NPF) swept the polls bagging 38 seats of the 60 seats polling 47.04 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Therefore, the North Eastern rim as well voted in a fragmented pattern.

Hence with the conclusion of 2009 Lok Sabha polls the bipolar competition for power still kept the national party system messy and undefined and the state voted in a fragmented pattern keeping into account local or state issues thereby sustaining the trend of multiple state party systems.

However, a severe jolt was dealt to the position of the Congress party in the party system with the recent 2014 Lok Sabha polls which saw the Congress-led UPA government getting dislodged from power for being getting engulfed into numerous corruption charges. BJP replaced it with its most remarkable performance since its inception. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the largest party by securing an absolute majority on its own with 282 seats polling 31.0 percent of votes and 66.04 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). BJP along with its allies like Akali Dal, Telegu Desam, Assam Gono Parishad secured 336 seats and Congress with its allies secured only 59 seats. Left Front has bagged 11 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). In the subsequent assembly election, states like Odisha, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Telangana have voted for non-BJP alternative thereby retaining the fragmented nature of the party system. Hence, the party system still stands fragmented at two levels, namely, national and state.

Conclusion:

The Indian party system exhibits quite a two different messy pictures for itself. Performance of the government in power, ability to ensure social justice, pro-people governance are some of the evident criterions that in present times determine the electoral fate of a political party. These parameters largely determine the nature of the party system as well. Due to the existence of multiplicity of parties the menu of choices widens and hence this deepens the fragmented nature of the party system to a great extent. In a country with so much of its diversity in terms of choices, cultures, languages, preferences, caste, etc. the probability of the party system exhibiting a uniform nature decreases. Hence, the Indian party system too exhibited a multi-party fragmented nature.

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[1]. 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

[1]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 strenghten 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 alterneatives 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 staes 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.[2] 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[3]. 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

[2]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).

[3] 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.[4] 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

[4] 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[5].

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

[5] 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* Jafferelot, "*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 oscilliating between INC and Janata Dal. However with the 1991 assmbly election the state party remained competitive multi-party bipolarized nature with the contest of power mainly oscilliating 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[6]. 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

[6]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, Faridpuir, 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[7] 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- Desai1978, p.1104)[8]. 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)[9] towards the end of 1974 through the conglomeration of several parties such as the BKD, the Swatantra Party, the Utkal Congress, and the

[7] *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.
[8] *See* W. H. Morris-Jones, "*Whose Emergency-India's or Indira's?",* The World Today, Vol. 31, No. 11 (Nov., 1975), pp. 451-461.
[9] 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[10].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 Muzzaffarnagar 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 tress".

[10] *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 infact 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[11]. 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

[11] 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.[12] 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 Charain 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).

[12] The election of Morarji Desai as the prime minister of the 1977 Janata government by Jayparakash 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"[13]. Presidents 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[14]. The Kalyan Singh-led state administration was a mute spectator to the entire frenzied incident of cultural nationalism[15]. 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

[13] *"Act of God: Kalyan Singh"*, The Hindu, December 3, 2004.

[14] 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.

[15] Ranjit Bhushan, *"Pile of Evidence"*, 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[16]. 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

[16] For the brief understanding of the rise in low caste movement *See* Christopher Jafferelot, *"Sanskritization vs. Ethnicization in India"* in "Religion, Caste and Politics in India", 2010, pp. 454-458. Also *See* Christopher Jafferelot, *"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 partied 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). V.P Singh gave the slogan 'Braham leave the country' (Jafferelot, 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 (Jafferelot, 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 (Jafferelot, 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).

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, baniyas, 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[17]. 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 concern 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

[17] Ranjit Bhusan and Ishan Joshi, *"Saffron Setback"*, 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 Loktanrik Party (NLP)[18] 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[19]. 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[20]. 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

[18] 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).
[19] *"Uncertainty in U.P, SP single largest party"*, The Hindu, February 25, 2002.
[20] *"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[21]. 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[22]. 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[23]. 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[24]. 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

[21] *See* Mukherjee Sutapa, *"Saffron taste fades"*, Outlook, Feb. 04, 2002. www.outlook.com, (accessed on 17 February, 2015 at 2:14 pm).
[22] *"Rajnath Singh retains Gupta ministry"*, The Hindu, October 28, 2000.
[23] *"Mayawati to be sworn in on May 03"*, The Hindu, April 30, 2002.
[24] *"Mayawati okays Taj Project"*, The Hindu, August 30, 2003.

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

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[28] 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

[25] *"Dismiss Jagmohan: Mayawati"*, The Hindu, July 29, 2003.
[26] *"Ajit Singh pulls out ministers from Mayawati government"*, The Hindu, May 25, 2003.
[27] *"Mulayam sworn in CM"*, The Hindu, August 30, 2003.
[28] *"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"[29].

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[30]. 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*'[31] 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

[29] *"Focus on Sarva Samaj: Mayawati"*, The Hindu, May 15, 2007.
[30] *"Mayawati declared wealth is Rs. 111.64 crore"*, The Hindu, March 14, 2012.
[31] 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[32]. 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[33]. 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[34]. 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

[32]"*UP election results: Ayodhya rejects BJP opts for Mulayam's candidate*", March, 06, 2012, www.ndtv.com, (accessed on 18th Feb., 2015, 1:35 pm).
[33]"*UP election results: Mayawati blames Congress, BJP for defeat: Say 70% Muslims picked Mulayam",* March, 07, 2012, www.ndtv.com, (accessed on 18th Feb., 2015, 1:50 pm).
[34] "*UP polls: Verdict for Rahul"*, March, 05, 2012, www.ndtv.com, (accessed on 19the 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[35]. 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[36].

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

[35] "*Rahul Gandhi analyses why Congress failed in UP"*, April, 05, 2012, www.ndtv.com, (accessed on 18 Feb., 2015, 12:30pm).
[36] *"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 drewing 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 9th November, 2000 as the 27th 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 29th October, 2001. He then voluntarily resigned when was asked by the BJP

leadership and Shri Bhagat Singh Koshiyari succeeded him[37]. The state party sysytem is consistently a competitive multi-party system which is bipolarized in nature with the contest for power mainly oscilliating 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)[38] 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 2nd March, 2002 till 7th 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, Dharhcula 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

[37] "Koshiyari may be new Uttaranchal CM", The Hindu, 29 October, 2001.
[38] "Tiwari sworn in as Uttaranchal CM", The Hindu, March 03, 2002.

government in the state[39]. 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[40]. 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[41]. He remained in office till June 26th, 2009. He was then replaced by Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" and he remained in office from June 27th, 2009 till September 10th, 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 11th, 2011 Ramesh Pokhriyal was replaced by Major General B.C Khanduri. He remained in power till March, 13th, 2012. Khanduri was sworn in as the chief minister of Uttarakhand for the second time replacing Ramesh Pokriyal "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 13th, 2012 and continued till January 31st, 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[42]. The Baghuna led government attained majority in the floor of the assembly with the support of three Bahujan

[39] "UKD and Independents lends support to BJP", The Hindu, March 04, 2007.
[40] "Khanduri to be CM", The Hindu, March 02, 2007.
[41] "Price rise a factor behind defeats: Sonia", The Hindu, March 07, 2007. Also *See* "Congress defeat", The Hindu, March 08, 2007.
[42] 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[43]. 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[44]. 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.

[43] *"Uttarakhand stand off ends"*, The Hindu, March 15, 2012.
[44] *"Rawat sworn in as Uttarakhand CM"*, The Hindu, February 02, 2014.

Chattisgarh

The state of Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh. The new state which came into being on 1st 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 Sate 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[45]. 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[46].

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

[45] Lalit Shastri, *"Jogi elected as Chhattisgarh CLP leader unanimously"*, The Hindu, November 01, 2000.
[46] *"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[47].

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 Vanwasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA) an affiliate of the Sangh Parivar[48], 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[49].

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[50]. 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

[47] Purnima S.Tripathi, "A loss of Traditional Vote", Frontline, Vol. 20, Issue. 26, Dec. 20- Jan. 02, 2004.
[48] 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.
[49] See Aarti Dhar, "Tribal votes helped BJP win Chhattisgarh", The Hindu, December 10, 2008.
[50] "Raman Singh sworn in as Chhattisgarh CM", www.ndtv.com (accessed on 14th 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 1951and 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). 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). 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)[51] and some Independents with Golap Chandra Borbora as the chief minister of the state (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). 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

[51] 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[52]. 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[53]. 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). Hence, with the 1985

[52] 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.

[53] 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)[54] militants and the Bodo movement by the United Bodo Nationalist Liberation Front which demanded a separate Bodoland,

[54] ULFA is a secessionist organisation which came into being with the aspiration to liberate Assam from India.

inclusion of Bodo language in the eight 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 Bhrigu 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 in 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[55]. 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[56]. 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[57] 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[58]. 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

[55] *"State's economic condition dismal: Gogoi",* The Hindu, May 20, 2001.
[56] *"17 Member Gogoi ministry sworn in"*, The Hindu, May 19, 2001.
[57] http://www.eci.nic.in
[58] *"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[59]. 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

[59] *"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[60]. 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[61]. 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[62]. Moreover, BPPF deserted Congress and allied with BJP and secured 12 seats with the 2016 assembly election.

[60] *"Gogoi sworn in"*, The Hindu, May 19, 2011.
[61] *"Former Assam minister joins BJP"*, The Hindu, August 25, 2016.
[62] *"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[63]. 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.

[63] *"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[64]. 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[65].

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). 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

[64] 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.

[65] *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[66] 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

[66] 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[67] 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[68] 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.

[67] 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).

[68] 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, Karunanaidhi, 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). Hence, with the 1971 election DMK emerged victorious with 184 seats out the 203 contested seats, polling 48.58 percent if 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 oscilliating 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 its 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[69] 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)[70] 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

[69] 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.

[70] 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[71].

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). 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[72]. 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

[71] A.S. Panneerselvan, *"Poes Garden to Prison"*, 18 December, 1996, www.outlookindia.com (accessed on 29 April, 2016 at 11:30 am).
[72] *"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[73]. 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[74]. 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[75]. She accused the DMK government of corruption charges, such the scam related to cement price rise[76]. She even accused Karunanidhi of promoting dynastic rule by promoting his son, Stalin as the chief ministerial candidate in the 2001 election campaign[77].

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[78]. Hence, Mr. O. Paneerselvam, the Revenue minister in the Jayalalitha ministry, was appointed as her successive chief minister[79]. 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). Democratic

[73] *"Anti-people policies drove away DMK allies: Ramados"*, The Hindu, April 25, 2001.
[74] *"Jayalalitha to campaign with redoubled vigour"*, The Hindu, April 25, 2001.
[75] *"End Karunanidhi misrule"*, The Hindu, May 02, 2001.
[76] *"Jayalalitha to expose one scam a day"*, The Hindu, April 30, 2001.
[77] *"I am no CM candidate: Stalin"*, The Hindu, May 03, 2001.
[78] 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.
[79] *"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 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[80]. 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[81] which involved many of the ministers of DMK tainted the image of the party and it was defeated with the next

[80] 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 vanniyars 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 (accessed on 23rd April, 2016 at 01:20 pm).

[81] 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[82].

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

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.

[82] *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[83]. 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[84]. 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[85].

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[86], 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[87]. 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). Jayalaalitha rode back to power by brilliantly blending popularity with performance[88]. To widen her aura and appeal,

[83] *"Jayalalitha rides wave, decimates DMK-led Front"*, The Hindu, May 14, 2011.
[84] *"Paneerselvam to be CM again"*, The Hindu, September 29, 2014.
[85] *"Jayalalitha takes back the reins in T.N"*, The Hindu, May 24, 2015.
[86] Marumalarchchi 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.
[87] *"Tamil Nadu polls: Vijayakant DMDK-PWF alliance's CM candidate"*, March 23, 2016, www.hindustantimes.com (accessed on 23 April, 2016 at 01:20pm)
[88] *"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[89]. Prior to

[89] 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 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 10th September 1964. However, a no-confidence motion was tabled against the Sankar-led coalition government by the opposition[90] and it was supported by fifteen Congress legislators who were mostly loyal to P.T Chacko[91], 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)[92] 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

[90] A breakaway group of Congressmen under the leadership of K.N George voted against the Sankar ministry.

[91] 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.

[92] 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 poling 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 1st, 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 Karunkaran 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[93] 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 10th 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

[93] 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 94contested 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 20th, 1996. The 11th 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[94]. 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[95]. Mr. Oommen Chandy was unanimously elected by the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) as the 19th chief minister of the Kerala to steer the UDF ministry[96]. 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[97]. 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

[94] *"Antony resigns, take responsibility for the electoral debacle"*, The Hindu, May 30, 2004.
[95] *"Leadership change cannot solve the problem: CPI (M)"*, The Hindu, August 31, 2004.
[96] *"Oommen Chandy is new Kerala CM"*, The Hindu, August 31, 2004.
[97] *"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[98]. 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[99]. 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[100] 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

[98] *"UDF posts victory by a whisker in Kerala"*, The Hindu, May 14, 2011.
[99] In Kerala no political fronts gets elected to govern for a second tenure in succession.
[100] 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[101]. 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[102]. 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[103]. 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

[101] *"BJP blames Cong-CPI (M) nexus for violence against its workers in Kerala"*, Business Line, March16, 2016.
[102] 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.
[103] *"Kerala hit by scams, controversies in 2015"*, The Economic Times, December 18, 2015.

47 seats[104]. 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).

[104] *"Massive LDF surge even as lotus blooms"*, The Hindu, May 20, 2016.

Chapter V

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

The Chapter similarly discusses the state party systems of the eastern and western regions. This chapter discusses some of the selected politically significant states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Maharashtra. The chapter aims to study some of the selected state party systems and its central features as well enlist 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 see how the newly formed political novices in the state such Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar, Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena in Maharashtra introduced changes in the state party systems.

Bihar

Bihar had been an equally significant state in the Hindi heartland and was under the Congress rule since independence. Bihar exhibited a competitive multiparty system with Congress as the 'majority party' in the state party system till the third assembly election. With the 1951 state election to the Legislative assembly of Bihar, Congress emerged as the largest political party with 239 seats out of the 322 contested seats with 41.38 percent of votes and 42.16 percent of seats. Jharkhand Party (JP) could bag just 32 out of the 53 seats with 8.01 percent of votes and 38.57 percent of seats. Socialist Party stood distant third with 23 seats polling 18.11 percent of votes and 22.18 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the second consecutive assembly election of 1957, INC bagged largest share of votes and seats for itself with 210 seats polling 42.09 percent of votes and 42.56 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) could fetch for itself 31 seats with 16.01 percent of votes and 21.76 percent of seats. Jharkhand Party won 31 seats out of the 70 seats with 7.08 percent of votes and 29.84 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress with the 1962 state election secured majority of seats and won 185 seats out of 318 seats with 41.35% of votes. PSP secured 14.17% of votes and won 29 seats out of the 84 contested seats with

6.23% of votes. Jana Sangh secured only 2.77% of votes and could win only 3 seats. Jharkhand Party, the state-based party could bag 20 of the 75 contested seats polling 4.39 percent of votes and 21.98 percent of seats. The state remained under the rule of the Congress Party since the first assembly poll with Srikrishna Sinha as the chief minister of the state (http://www.eci.nic.in).

Factors that led to Emergence of Non-Congress Alternative in the State Party System

The incompetent handling of Bihar famine by the then Congress ruled state government under the leadership of Chief Minister K.B Sahay[1] coupled with factionalism within the Bihar Congress over the post of the chief minister after the death of Srikrishna Sinha eroded the credibility of the Indian National Congress in the state. The K.B Sahay government was discredited for not being able to assess the situation that developed during the famine of 1966-1967 adequately and was neither able to organize relief for the suffering masses of the state. The overemphasis on industrialization by the Congress ruled central government led to the neglect of the agricultural sector in the country. The nation in general faced food crisis. Bihar was worst effected by drought as well as famine. Bihar has been primarily an agricultural state. The capacity of the industrial sector to create employment opportunities was very restricted as the state was never prosperous industrially. Hence, the agricultural sector remained one of the most primary sectors for the state and the rising population depended heavily on it for consumption. Hence, a good monsoon is always very important for the state because sufficient rainfall can yield the required food grain for the growing population of the state. Hence, the drought and famine situation led to starvation for the masses (Dyson & Maharatna, 1992, pp.1325-1326). In addition to it, the inefficiency of the Congress ruled state administration to deal with the grave situation created dissatisfaction towards the Congress Party and the newly formed non-Congress coalition benefitted from the situation and it emerged as the most viable alternative to the electorates who were also facing numerous other crises. A general wave of anti-Congressism had swept the country and Bihar too was influenced by it.

[1] For chronological names of successive chief ministers of Bihar
See http://vidhansabha.bih.nic.in/cm.html

Congress was already riddled with factionalism and lacked the necessary organizational zeal and strength and therefore its electoral performance had suffered a nosedive in the state.

Since the death of Srikrishna Sinha in 1961 who had been in charge of the state mantle since 1937 a battle for succession developed among three potential contenders namely, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Binodanand Jha and K.B Sahay (Navneeth, 1968, p. 1311). However, with the support of K.B Sahay, Binodanand Jha became the chief minister of the state after the death of Sinha and he remained in the position till 1963 (www.biharassembly.org). However, he was dislodged from his position under the Kamraj Plan and was replaced by K.B Sahay who remained in power till 1967. Bihar with the 1967 assembly polls for the first time since independence had a non-Congress government. Since the 1967 assembly election and till the 1977 assembly election, Bihar exhibited a competitive multiparty system that was bipolarized (between Congress Party and a non-Congress alternative) in nature and was characterized by coalition politics. Large number of Congress Party workers had defected from the party and new political parties came into being. This weakened the strength of the Congress Party in the state. Apart from the drought during the Kharif season of 1966, other grave issues were also brewing in the state prior to the 1967 assembly election which included discontentment over rising prices of essential commodities, student in general were dissatisfied with the Congress-led administration in the state due to the death of a student in 1967 by police firing, the government employees were unhappy with the administration due to stagnant pay structure with no increase in dearness allowances. Bihar voted in favour of a non-Congress government (the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal Government) which comprised of the Sanghatha Socialist Party (SSP), Praja Socialist Party (PSP), the Jana Sangh (BJS), the Jan Kranti Dal (JKD) and the Communist Party of India (CPI). In the1967 State election to the Legislative Assembly of Bihar, INC secured 128 seats out of the 318 seats with 33.09 percent of votes whereas BJS secured only 26 seats, PSP got some 18 seats, SSP managed to secure 68 seats, JKD bagged just 13 seats and the CPI won 24 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). SVD formed a coalition and secured majority in the assembly and Mahamaya Prasad Sinha of Jan Kranti Dal[2] became the first non-

[2] The political novice JKD was formed after Mahamaya Prasad Sinha and Kamakhya Narain Singh (Raja of Ramgarh) defected from the Congress party and formed the party. JKD led to realignment of

Congress Chief Minister of Bihar. The 1966 famine and drought situation, heavy flood in North Bihar during 1967 and the poor handling of these crises by the Congress ruled state administration, student unrest over the death of a student due to police firing, growing dissatisfaction and agitations by government employees for better salaries and allowance, rise in the rate of mortality in the state along with rising cases of starvation and malnutrition jeopardized the Sahay ministry's prospect of coming back to power with the 1967 state election (Brass,1986, pp.251-252). Besides, the electoral fortune of the Congress party suffered in the state because of the internal differences, dissensions and bickering among the party bosses and workers (Navneeth, 1968, p. 1311).

However, even the United Front ministry headed by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha was not able to emerge as a powerful alternative to Congress Party in the state. The government was displaced from power following a no-confidence motion within a year of its formation. Many UF ministers defected and formed the Shoshit Dal, another political novice which then came to power with the support of the Congress party. The defection by Bhindeshwari Prasad Mandal with numerous ministers from the SVD government led to the downfall of the United Front government. Mandal defected from Congress (due to differences with RamLakhan Yadav, another important Yadav leader in Congress) and joined SSP. On February 1968, B.P Mandal was sworn in as the chief minister of the state. This new ministry however lasted for more than a month and was replaced by another non-congress coalition with the backing of U.F under the chief ministership of Bhola Paswan Shastri, a dalit, following a defection by 17 Congressmen who voted with the UF on a motion of no-confidence. The Shastri-led government too fell on 1968 after a major defection and President's rule was imposed in the state for 244 days. The Paswan ministry also did not remain in power for long. Raja of Ramgarh, one of the greatest Zaminder of Bihar who always played an active role in Bihar politics in order to secure his own interest, rebelled against the Paswan government with his followers due to differences with the Paswan government over the allocation of portfolios (Brass, 1968, pp.1183-1184). Thus, Bihar witnessed formation of a series of unstable and underperforming governments that failed to provide any services to its masses and was only

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the state party system by relegating Congress to the position of the Opposition party in the state and itself emerging as the one of the constituents of the ruling coalition.

characterized by internal dissensions, factionalism and instability. The interest of the state and its masses was overshadowed by the personal interests of the power craving prominent leaders. The state witnessed large-scale assault of democracy due to the conflict over political opportunities.

The state went for assembly election in 1969 and the Congress restored its position in the state and it won 118 of the 318 contested seats polling 30.46 percent of votes and 30.46 percent of seats. Shoshit Dal won six seats and Janata Party bagged 14 seats. Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) could fetch just 6 seats for itself and BJS could capture 34 of the 304 contested seats polling 15.63 percent of votes and 21.85 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress did not get a majority in the legislature and formed a coalition government by allying with the Soshit Dal, the Janata Party and the Jharkhand Party. The Sardar Harihar Singh ministry lasted for only 77 days (www.biharlegislativeassembly.org). This was replaced by the formation of another non-congress United Front ministry that came to power in the state. The CPI, the Jan Sangh and the SSP supported the ministry from outside and the Bhola Paswan Shastri-led government remained in power for only one year. A 255 days President rule was imposed in the state. Between 1969 and 1972 five ministries were formed (Shah, 1977, p.609). Congress remained in power with the 1972 assembly polls as well with 167 seats polling 33.12 percent of votes and 41.22 percent of seats. Indian National Congress (Organisation) could win just 30 of the 272 contested seats polling 14.82 percent of votes and 16.84 percent of seats. BJS fetched for itself only 25 seats out of the 270 contested seats with 11.69 percent of votes and 13.80 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The socialist policies adopted by the Congress (I) enabled the party to improve its tally of seats and share of votes. However, the socialist measures such as move for immediate land reform measures, public distribution of food grains, provision of housing sites for rural poor, ceiling on rural holding, removal of disparities in income and opportunities, etc. were implemented inefficiently. Moreover, the party remained riddled with factionalism and rivalries for ministerial positions among each caste, viz. Kayasthas, Bhumiars, Rajputs and Brahmins aggravated and it became a dominant feature thus making the governments in power inefficient and underperforming. Simultaneously, the dalit and backward caste community of Bihar continuously kept struggling to challenge and replace pre-dominance of the upper caste groups over state politics and administration. People of

the country were much more interested in 'performance' and substantial socio-economic developments rather than on vague promises and manifestoes.

With the 1977 assembly polls the contest for power in Bihar oscillated mainly between Congress and the Janata Party, the newly formed anti-congress coalition. The Janata Party was able to dislodge the Congress party from power by bagging 214 of the 311contested seats, polling 42.68 percent of votes and 44.23 percent of seats following the anti-congress wave in the state and in the country as well. INC could fetch for itself only 57 of the 286 contested seats, polling 23.58 percent of votes and 26.58 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the 1977 assembly polls, it secured 9.54 percent less number of votes and 14.64 percent of less number of seats. Indira Gandhi began to lose her credibility and popularity from 1973 onwards due to nationwide spread of droughts and some other serious challenges. Although the 1971 Indo-Pak War which led to the creation of Bangladesh owing to the political maturity of Mrs. Indira Gandhi gave her a stature of a national leader but it caused a huge strain on India's economy. The economy toiled through the effects of inflation. Prices of all commodities increased manifold. Oil prices shoot up following the Arab-Israel War in 1973. Hence, there was an international oil crisis. The economy got engulfed with the after effects of inflation which caused hardships to the people. There was a decline in industrial growth and agricultural productivity, along with reduced employment opportunities. With the deteriorating economic situation sporadic agitations of discontentment erupted in several parts of the country and eventually took the form of movement. Therefore, the Congress party in general lost its popularity.

The country witnessed Naxalite upsurge in various parts of the country organized mostly by poor peasants and the landless as they were grossly deprived of their legitimate claims and rights and were oppressed by the feudal lords. The Naxalite movement have had spread almost throughout the country but was most prominent in the state of West Bengal (in the Naxalbari area of Darjeeling District), Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and in Bihar as well.[3]

The country also witnessed movements organized by the students in protest against corruption in the government, rising prices of food grains, cooking oil and other

[3] The naxalites used to forcefully take away lands from the rich landlords and gave it to the poor and the landless.

essential commodities, food scarcity, unemployment etc. Under the leadership of Jay Prakash Narayan these students movement, which were mostly intense in Bihar and Gujarat, gained rigorous momentum and assumed a national stature.[4] The movement demanded dismissal of the government at the centre led by the Congress. Besides, there was a nationwide strike by Indian Railway and its workers in 1974, paralyzing the entire nation.[5] Bihar was no exception and it saw emergence of a non-Congress coalition government in the state. The Bihar Movement (1974-1975) under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan aimed at bringing about a revolution in the economic, educational, social, political and other spheres. It challenged the existing system (Shah, p.605, 1977). Bihar was engulfed with acute backwardness. Its per capita income was lowest among all the states which in turn affected the pattern of consumption and production. Thousands of people died due to flood, famine and epidemics. Health services were abysmally poor. Agricultural labourers led a very pathetic life and was deprived of proper irrigational facilities and failed to get proper price for their produce. They had to pay high prices for seeds, fertilizers and the landlords from the upper castes exploited these small cultivators or the agricultural labourers who mostly belonged to the scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and middle and low castes groups. The state administration took no measures to redress these grave issues and remained riddled with factionalism and competed for more powerful ministerial positions. The Bihar administration remained under the control of upper castes and landed class who dominated the administration and influenced government's decision-making process and failed to adopt a pro-people image. This created a resentment among the oppressed and deprived sections of the society who revolted by voting for a non-Congress coalition in the state. Corruption, black marketing, hoarding was rampant in the state. Agrarian tensions were intense in the state since late sixties. Hence, Bihar witnessed Naxalite upsurge in the state which involved mobilising poor peasants, landless labourers to demand for better services from the state administration. These sections of the society remained deprived of every essential service such as health services, basic education, etc. During the seventies due to rising inflation the other sections of the society such as the teachers,

[4] These movements were non-violent in nature and had assumed a political character

[5] The National Coordination Committee for Railway men's Struggle led by George Fernandes gave a call for nationwide strike by all employees of the Railways for pressing their demand related to bonus and service conditions.

government employees, and middle class had to face increasing hardships. The state in protest of uncontrolled rising prices of essential commodities got engulfed with agitations, demonstrations, protest movements and bandhs. Meanwhile, the state also witnessed agitations by students for reduction in fees, prices of books and essential commodities, allowances for unemployed youths, better facilities in student hostels, etc. Moreover, the imposition of national emergency by the Indira-led central government and the excesses committed during the emergency further jeopardized the electoral credibility of the party in the state. The excesses committed by the Indira led Congress Party invited large scale unpopularity for the party in the country as well and therefore the Congress (I) ministry was replaced by the Janata government in the country as well as in most of the states (Shah, 1977, pp. 606-614). The Jagannath Mishra[6] administration during the emergency period of 1975-1977 further escalated the level of unpopularity of the Congress Party in the state of Bihar. The Mishra administration was marked by corruption, favouritism, nepotism, criminalization of politics, ineffectiveness of the state administration and the State Police, unconstitutional political interference in matters of appointment and administration, increasing intensity of riots and peasant rebellions due falling standard of living (Kohli, 2009, pp. 264-265). Hence, even in the state of Bihar Congress (I) didn't emerge victorious with the 1977 assembly election.

The Emergence of Identity Politics in Bihar

Karpoori Thakur after assuming power in June 1977 as a populist initiative and in order to create a backward caste based vote bank introduced reservation for the backward castes in government services as recommended in the Mungeri Lal Commission in order to facilitate these sections of the society to scale up economically and socially. The former Congress ruled Jagannath Mishra government did not take any initiative to implement these recommendations which prescribed for reservation for backward caste groups in jobs and educational institutions and this further destabilize the position of the party in the state (Bharti, 1990, pp. 309-310).

[6] Mishra as a Sanjay Gandhi loyalists and he was made the chief minister during the emergency periods to keep the state administration under the indirect control of the Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi.

However, the Janata government was not able to prove itself as a viable alternative to Congress party because it too got riddled with factionalism, dissensions and internal squabbles because of its incoherent character. Moreover, the upper castes coterie felt threatened by the rise of a backward class leader and ultimately an upper caste-dalit alliance succeeded in replacing Karpoori Thakur, (a barber, who represented the entire backward community) by Ramsunder Das, a dalit, as the chief minister of the state. He continued to rule till 1980 under the banner of the Janata Party. Increasing incidents of violent riots and demonstrations by the students from upper-caste backgrounds along with the Bihar Congress workers threatened the survival of Karpoori Thakur and his reservation policies. Eventually, in April 1979 Karpoori Thakur resigned from his position of the chief minister of the state and Ramsunder Das succeeded him.

Therefore, with the 1980 state election to the legislative assembly of Bihar, due to the incompetent administration by the Janata Party, Congress was bestowed with the largest number of seats. It won 169 of the 311 contested seats polling 34.20 percent of votes and 35.05 percent of seats. Janata Party contested the election in the form of various factions, namely, JNP, JNP (JP) and JNP (SC). JNP drew a blank. JNP (JP) secured only 13 of the 240 contested seats with 7.211 percent of votes and 9.48 percent of seats and JNP (SC) bagged only 42 of the 254 contested seats polling 15.63 percent of votes and 19.38 percent of seats. BJP, the offshoot of Jana Sangh could fetch for itself only 21 of the 246 contested seats with 8.41 percent of votes and 11.29 percent of seats. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) won 11 of the 31 seats with 1.69 percent of votes and 25.11 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress party reemerged as the largest party with the 1985 assembly polls as well with 196 of the 323 contested seats polling 39.30 percent of votes and 39.35 percent of seats. BJP could secure just 16 of the 234 contested seats with 7.54 percent of votes and 10.53 percent of seats. JNP won 13 of the 229 contested seats with 7.21 percent of votes and 10.2 percent of seats. JMM could win only 9 of the 57 contested seats with 10.82 percent of votes and 13.75 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). With both the state elections Congress came to power owing to ‘Indira wave’ and ‘Rajiv wave’ (Louis, p. 979, 2000). Hence since the 1980 assembly election till the 1985 assembly election, Bihar remained characterized by a competitive multiparty system with restoration of Congress Party as the majority party in the state party system. For almost a decade

Bihar remained entangled with maladministration, riots, increasing incidents of political violence, brutal murders, socio-economic problems such as rising prices, caste rivalry and atrocities, political discontentment, police atrocities, massacres, militancy, naxalism, agrarian and economic stagnation, insufficient infrastructural development. Governmental ineffectiveness and no major policy initiatives undertaken during the Mishra, Dubey, Bhagatwat Jha Azad and Satyendra Narayan Singh tenures contributed and worsened the socio-economic and political condition of Bihar. Hence since 1990 Congress Party has lost ground in the state of Bihar (Kohli, 2009, pp 271-275).

Due to vacuum created by the unpopularity of the Congress party many state–based political parties acquired prominence at the national and state level politics. With the demise of Rajiv-led Congress (I) at the national level due to various drawbacks, Janata Dal emerged as an alternative force to reckon with at the national level as well in various states. The socialist forces in the state combined under the banner of Janata Dal came to power in the state of Bihar with the 1990 assembly polls. Janata Dal (JD) emerged as the new alternative for the state with the 1990 assembly election and INC was reduced to the position of an opposition party with 71 of the 323 contested seats with 24.78 percent of votes and 24.86 percent of seats. Janata Dal bagged 122 of the 276 contested seats polling 25.61 percent of votes and 29.84 percent of seats. BJP 39 seats with 11.61 percent of votes and 16.35 percent of seats. JMM, a state-based party secured 19 of the 82 contested seats with 3.14 percent of votes 15.20 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The implementation of the Mandal Commission report at the central level empowered the backward castes section of the country and made these sections politically more significant. The backward caste groups deserted the Congress for being apathetic to their aspirations and rallied behind parties that promised to represent their cause and fulfill their aspirations. The votes by the Yadavs, Kurmis and the Koeris, the numerically more significant backward caste in the North Indian state such as U.P and Bihar have since 1989 exercised a huge impact in the reconfiguration and realignment of the party system in these states. The implementation of the reservation policy by the Janata Dal-led central government accentuated the trend of caste-based politics in the country as well as in various states such as UP and Bihar. The implementation of the reservation policy by V.P Singh government enabled consolidation of the Other Backward Caste (OBC) vote behind

the Janata Dal. The electorates voted on caste line. Political parties of the state contesting elections appealed to the masses in the name of identity. The OBCs rallied behind the Janata Dal, the upper caste continued to remain inclined towards the Congress or towards the BJP. The Janata Dal swept the assembly polls of 1990 due to the absolute support from these three OBC castes, namely the Yadavs, the Kurmis and the Koeris[7] (Jenkins, p.126, 2004). In Bihar, the Janata Dal could consolidate its base due to the support it had received from the OBCs, dalits and the minorities (Sinha & Sinha, 1996, p.1650). The Janata Dal emerged as an 'alternative' to Congress and could come back to power in the state with the 1995 assembly election as well. Hence again since 1989 assembly election the state party system acquired a bipolarized nature with a competitive multiparty state party system. However, the Yadavs were numerically more powerful than the kurmis and the koeris and were the biggest gainer of the reservation policy. The Yadavs are the political elites among the backward castes and benefitted the most from the reservation policies. Laloo Prasad Yadav emerged as the new leader representing the backwards in the state. He became the chief minister of the state in 1990 and in 1995 as well. After the death of Karpoori Thakur (who for the first time implemented affirmative policies for the backward caste as per the recommendations of the Mungeri Lal Commission) new leaders such as Laloo Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Jai Prakash Yadav emerged as the representative of the community (Verma, 1991, p.1143).

The implementation of Mandal Commission Report invited large-scale protest from the upper caste section of the society whose dominance was threatened in the political, administrative and bureaucratic life. The anti-Mandal agitation was backed by BJP to consolidate and expand its base among the Hindu and upper caste vote bank and the pro Mandal-agitations were spearheaded by Janata Dal. This enabled Janata

[7] They possessed agricultural lands but the sector remained mainly dominated by the upper caste such as the Rajputs, the Bhumiars and the Brahmins. The lower castes had to face repression and therefore they demanded strong agricultural reforms. Bihar witnessed key land reform movements such as the Bhoodan movement and the movement led by the Kisan Sabha which fought for abolition of the zamindari system, wages to agricultural labourers, abolition of land ceiling, etc. With time some of the backward castes group could improve their economic position emerge as the new agrarian class or the 'kulaks' and began to assert their position in the social and political spheres. They resented the rule of the Congress party, largely labeled as the party representing the interests of the upper caste in various instances and became more assertive in their resistance with the JP movement. Infact following the JP movement with its epicenter in the state of Bihar the Janata Party could come to power and installed a backward as the chief minister of the state breaking the dominance of the upper caste in the Bihar's political system. The implementation of the Mandal Commission Report provided impetus to their assertiveness and enabled the OBCs, mainly the Yadavs to bring an overhaul transformation in the political and bureaucratic life of Bihar.

Dal to emerge as the new alternative and ushered the commencement of the process of consolidation of the hegemony of the backward and dalit caste in the state of Bihar. It intensified the backward caste solidarity in the state which existed since late 1960s. The backward and the dalit aspired for dignified and decent life free from exploitation and suppression and wanted to scale up economically, socially and educationally in the society. The BJP in order to consolidate its base also organised massive protest. A *rath yatra* was announced after the V.P Singh, the then Prime Minister of 1989 Janata Dal-led central government announced partial implementation of the Mandal Commission Report to ensure affirmative policies for the backward castes and empower the backward caste against the upper castes. This led to large-scale anti-mandal agitation mostly led by upper-caste organistaions, parties and student association. The anti–Mandal agitation which involved road blockades, self-immolation, boycott of classes in colleges and universities, demonstrations, ransacking of government offices and properties, vandalism, processions, etc. gained momentum in Uttar Pradesh and gradually started spreading its tentacles in the adjoining states. Bihar was also engulfed by it besides Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Delhi, etc (Bharti, 1990, p.309). However, in Bihar the incidents of violence was negligible as the Laloo Prasad Yadav government in power prevented the Advani-led *rath yatra* from entering the state and arrested Advani during his campaign at Samastipur thereby preventing incidence of communal riots in the state. Bihar reported not a single communal violence at the aftermath of the Babri mosque demolition. The Muslims of the state felt secure under the leadership of Laloo Prasad Yadav. These incidences perpetuated and consolidated the OBC-Dalit-Muslim-Tribal support for the Laloo Prasad Yadav-led Janata Dal government in the state. However, the truncated implementation of the reservation policy mostly in favour of the Yadav community invited unpopularity for the leader. The Yadavs have benefited more than any other lower caste groups because of its numerical strength and they were also favoured by their own caste leaders. The trend of 'Yadavization' invited resentment from other components of the OBC section of the society, namely the kurmis and the koeris (Jaffrelot, 2010, p.475). This led to a split in Janata Dal in 1994 when Nitish Kumar, a prominent Kurmi leader along with George Fernandes, an eminent socialist resented against the biasness of the Laloo Prasad government towards his own caste fellows and formed a party known as the Samata Party (SP)

(www.samataparty.org.in). Soon after the formation of the party the kurmis and koeris switched over their allegiance to the Samata party and voted for the Samata Party-BJP alliance to uproot the Laloo Prasad Yadav's Janata Dal from power. However, the alliance could not tilt the position of the Laloo-led Janata Dal in the state.

Coupled with this the Laloo Prasad Yadav–led Janata Dal government got indulged in anti-people and corrupt practices. The government used repressive measures to curb the demands of the people. The peasants' organisations fighting against the landed class and their oppressions had to face serious difficulties and repression such as illegal arrest, police firing ban over peasant organisation, etc. in the hands of the state machinery. The demand for the separate state of Jharkhand was neither fulfilled despite the fact that JMM were allies of the ruling Janata Dal (JD). JD had earlier promised to fulfill the demand of JMM once it comes to power. Apart from the peasant class, the working class also had to undergo numerous injustices such as retrenchment during the rule of JD government. His style of function became a one-man show; democracy was butchered due to the authoritarian functioning by the party and the government. The party and the government were riddled by infightings and rivalries. The arrogance of Laloo Prasad led to the waning of his charisma and invited unpopularity for Janata Dal (Kumar, 1999, pp.2474-2475). He embarked upon an anti-encroachment policy during the late 1995 to beautify Patna, the capital city of Bihar and this drive by his government made him more unpopular among the masses. Although during the election campaign he spoke for development for the common masses but his support for the New Economic Policy of the Rao-led Congress (I) government robbed him of his pro-people image (Sinha & Sinha, 1996, p. 1651).

The 1995 state election in fact, increased the tally of seats for Janata Dal. It secured 45 more seats with the 1995 assembly polls. It bagged for itself 167 of the 264 contested seats polling 27.08 percent of votes and 34.50 percent of seats. INC secured only 29 of the 230 seats with 16.27 percent of votes and 16.51 percent of seats. BJP won 41 of the 315 contested seats polling 12.96 percent of votes and 13.37 percent of seats. Samata Party (SP) could fetch for itself just seven seats out of the 310 contested seats with 7.06 percent of votes and 7.37 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Laloo Prasad could secure clear majority and could sustain himself in power for the

next few assembly polls because of the continuous support from the Muslim-Yadav-Dalit combine.

Moreover, the state was subjected to massive underdevelopment, lawlessness, increasing cases of kidnapping and ransom, lip service about land reforms and apathetic attitude of the Laloo-led government towards these serious issues further disenchanted the people of Bihar. The involvement of Laloo Prasad Yadav in the fodder scam culminated the undisputed rule of the leader in the state. Governor A.K Kidwai sanctioned a CBI prosecution against Laloo Prasad Yadav for his alleged involvement in the famous fodder scam in which the state exchequer was plundered and it had to incur heavy losses (Kumar, 1999, p.2475). He was succeeded by his wife, Rabri Devi in 1997. However, the Rabri Devi-led government was arbitrarily pulled down and President's Rule was imposed by the then BJP-led NDA government at the national level. Soon with a span of twenty-five days she was reinstated to compensate for their unconstitutional act by the Vajpayee-led Union government.

Meanwhile, Laloo Prasad Yadav was evicted from Janata Dal due to his involvement in the scam by Sharad Yadav. In July 1997 he formed his own political party namely, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) along with Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Smt. Kanti Singh and seventeen other Lok sabha MPs and eight other Rajya sabha MLAs[8]. It emerged as the breakaway group of Janata Dal (www.rjd.co.in). Other scandals that have further tarnished the image of Laloo Prasad and his government were the bitumen scandal of Rs. 100 crore, housing scam utilizing the land meant for the poor tribals of Rs. 400 crore, the supply of need scam of Rs. 100 crore and a state patronized loot of forest resources of Rs. 50 crore[9].

The 2000 state election to the legislative assembly of Bihar produced Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), a state-based party of Laloo

Prasad Yadav and a political novice in the state, as the largest party with 124 seats and 28.34 percent of votes and 31.28 percent of seats. INC secured only 23 of the 324 contested seats, polling 11.06 percent of votes and 11.06 percent of seats. BJP won 67 of the 168 seats polling 14.864 percent of votes and 28.89 percent of seats. Samata

[8] A 'national' party convention called by Bihar chief minister Laloo Prasad Yadav in New Delhi passed a resolution renaming the Janata Dal as the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Its mandate: to further social justice and secularism. Its promise: to back the United Front government to the hilt.

[9] *See* Ranjit Bhusan, *"Seasons Of Scandals"*, Outlook, July 24, 1996.

Party, another state based party, could fetch for itself 34 of the 120 contested seats with 8.65 percent of votes and 22.77 percent of seats and JD (U) secured 22 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The election produced a Hung Assembly as no party was able to secure absolute majority. Both Rabri Devi and Nitish Kumar staked claim to form the government in the state. Nitish Kumar with the support of NDA, JMM and few Independents staked his claim to form the government in the state whereas Rabri Devi of RJD along with the support of Congress (I), CPI-M and BSP expressed their willingness to form the government in the state[10]. Although RJD was the largest party but the Governor invited Nitish Kumar-led NDA to form the government in the state and was sworn in as the chief minister by Governor V.C Pande[11]. Following the swearing in of Nitish Kumar, RJD launched vigorous agitations against the unconstitutional decision of the Governor and accused him of acting in a partisan manner. Soon Nitish Kumar had to step down as he failed to prove his majority in the legislative assembly. RJD had greater number of seats than NDA[12]. RJD's Rabri Devi was sworn in as the chief minister and was directed by the Governor to prove her majority in the assembly within 10 days. On March 17, 2000 she proved her majority with 166 Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) along with the support of Congress (I), KSP, MCC, CPI-M and 11 Independents[13]. She continued in office till March, 2005. The state conducted its assembly poll in February, 2005 and RJD[14] fetched 75 of the 215 contested seats with 25.07 percent of votes and 28.35 percent of seats. INC had secured only 10 seats, whereas BJP secured 27 seats polling 10.97 percent of votes and 24.91 percent of seats. Lok Janshakti Party (LJP)[15] bagged only 29 of the 178 contested seats polling 12.62 percent of votes and 17.33 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nin.in). The electorates delivered a fractured verdict and no political party was able to secure an absolute majority. Soon a stalemate situation developed around the issue of government formation in the state as no political party or coalition

[10] *"NDA, RJD stake claim"*, The Hindu, March 02, 2000.
[11] *"Nitish Kumar sworn in as CM"*, The Hindu, March 04, 2000.
[12] *"Nitish Quits, Rabri stakes claim"*, The Hindu, March 11, 2000.
[13] *"Comfortable win for Rabri Devi"*, March 17, 2000.
[14] Meanwhile, RJD had suffered a split when Ranjan Prasad Yadav in April 28, 2001deserted the party and spearheaded the formation of RJD (Democratic). He was expelled from RJD after he rebelled against RJD supreme Laloo Prasad Yadav. Hence due to internal dissensions the strength of the party in the state had weakened and its share of votes got scattered between splinter groups. Earlier Sharad Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Narendra Singh all have deserted RJD. Dissidents had made every effort to throttle Rabri Devi government and have actively propagated for an alternative government in Bihar.
[15] Ram Vilas Paswan parted ways with Janata Dal (United) and formed the political Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) on November 29, 2000.

of parties was in the position to form the government in the state. Rabri Devi staked claim to form the government with 75 MLAs as the leader of the largest party along with the support of Congress (I), NCP, CPI-M, and BSP. NDA too staked its claim[16]. LJP of Ram Vilas Paswan refused to support either RJD or BJP-led NDA and rather favoured the decision of Governor Buta Singh to impose President's rule in the state[17]. LJP had 29 MLAs. LJP, a political novice, acted as spoiler and wrested the chances of RJD as well as NDA to form the government in the state[18]. Hence, Bihar came under Presidential rule since March 08, 2005 for almost 262 days due to a deadlock over the government formation (www.vidhansabha.bih.nic.in).

In Bihar, JD (U)[19] came to power in the state by winning 88 seats with 20.46 percent of votes and 37.14 percent of seats with the October 2005 mid-term assembly polls in alliance with BJP which secured 55 of the 102 contested seats polling 15.65 percent of votes and 35.64 percent of seats. INC secured only 9 seats and won only 10 of the 203 contested seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Nitish Kumar was sworn in as the chief minister of Bihar of the NDA government[20]. The alliance of JD (U) with BJP paid manifold. The disintegration of RJD and fall in popularity of Laloo Prasad Yadav enabled JD (U) and BJP to fill the vacuum. Moreover, the populist rhetoric and progressive image of Nitish Kumar yielded electoral benefits for the combine.

Bihar got swayed away by Nitish wave and installed Janata Dal (United) to power with 115 seats polling 22.58 percent of votes and 38.77 percent of seats with the 2010 assembly election. BJP bagged 91of the 102 contested seats polling 16.49 percent of votes and 39.56 percent of seats. INC secured only 4 of the 243 contested seats. RJD bagged only 22 of the 168 contested seats with 18.84 percent of votes and 27.31 percent of seats. LJP could bag just 3 of the 75 contested seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

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[16] *"Rabri Devi stakes claim"*, The Hindu, march 06, 2005.
[17] *"Bihar Governor Recommends Presidential rule"*, The Hindu, March 07, 2005.
[18] *"I Take the Blame, says Paswan"*, The Hindu, March 07, 2005.
[19] The Sharad Yadav faction of the Janata Dal, the Lokshakti Party and the Samata Party merged to form the the Janata Dal (United). On 30 October 2003, the Samata Party led by George Fernandes and Nitish Kumar merged with the Janata Dal. The merged entity was called Janata Dal (United) with the arrow symbol of Janata Dal (United) and the green and white flag of the Samata Party. The uniting force is believed to be common opposition to Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar especially after the RJD welcomed Samata Party rebels like Raghunath Jha into the party. The JD (U) along with its alliance partner, the BJP defeated the RJD-led UPA government in Bihar in November 2005. Janata Dal (United) (JD-U) is a centre-left Indian political party with political presence mainly in Bihar and Jharkhand. Janata Dal (United) party mentor and patron is the veteran socialist leader George Fernandes. *See* http:// janatadalunited.org
[20] *"Nitish Kumar to be sworn in today"*, The Hindu, November 24, 2005.

The Assembly Election in Bihar this time was very crucial in the electoral politics of the country. Caste divisions had always dominated elections in Bihar. Through October 2005 assembly polls people voted for 'change'. Since then the whole political grammar of Bihar has changed. It was the most significant election in the history of Bihar in the past two decades as 'development' and not caste decided the election in Bihar. Combination of pro-people futuristic visions and well crafted social engineering contributed to Nitish-led JD (U) combine's victory. The election was contested by the Janata Dal (United), Rashtriya Janata Dal of Lalu Prasad Yadav, Lok Janshakti Party of Ram Vilas Paswan, BJP- led NDA, the Left combine, INC, Independents. The election was scheduled to hold in six phases in October-November 2010. The result on 24th November saw JD (U)-BJP-led NDA combine coming to power in the state for the second consecutive term[21].

The Rashtriya Janata Dal and Lok Janshakti Party constituted the main opposition and resorted to caste and community considerations for creating vote banks for themselves. BJP allied with JD (U) and this alliance was crucial to keep itself intact in the state politics. Although BJP's support base in the state has decreased as large number of upper caste voters has drifted towards the congress party. The party had enjoyed support bases among the Bhumikars, Thakurs, and the Brahmins. JD (U) base consisted of the OBCs, Most Backward Castes (MBCs) and a section of the Muslims. Yadav, Kurmis, Koeris and Lower OBCs supported JD (U). RJD enjoyed support mostly among the Yadav community and LJP enjoyed support mostly among the Dussadh Dalits.

The JD (U) and the NDA combine swept the polls bagging 206 seats of the 243 assembly seats. JD (U) accounted for 115 seats and BJP secured 91 seats. Other parties were made to bite the dust. Congress won four seats and independent and others accounted for six seats. CPI won one seat, RJD won 22 seats and LJP won 3 seats. The performance of the JD (U) in fact improved. In 2005 the combine bagged 143 seats, JD(U) got 88 seats while BJP got 55 seats, RJD got 54 seats, LJP won 10 seats while Congress secured a mere nine seats 3 seats combining it to only 25 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

[21] *"Landslide for JD (U)-BJP combine in Bihar"*, The Hindu, November 25, 2010.

Bihar has been a most depressed and unruly state. Bihar faced certain problems like pot hold roads, indolent teachers, apathetic officials, insurgent Maoists, devastating floods, shortage of power, skewed landholdings, caste resentment, low per capita income, cases of kidnapping which were high, there was no law and order situation in the state, etc. Bihar saw some glaring transformation under the regime of Nitish Kumar. He has transformed Bihar by imposing law and order, has put the gangsters behind the bars, resorted the state its role of one which will ensure security, ensured speedy trials, compelled gun-owners to conceal their weapon, ensured that no convicted criminals get license for ration or liquor shops, ensured safety for the people, people now move out of their homes after dark and drive through the new flyover, the economy has surged at double digits (10.5%). As per observers he has built over 2,400 km of road during 2009, uprooted jungle raj, activated the state police and has improved infrastructure (Kumar, Ranjan, 2014, pp. 262-282). During the JD (U)-BJP regime attempt has been made to ensure vast improvement in public health along with improvement in the primary and the secondary sector, initiated legislation to empower the extremely backward caste communities, proposed special schemes for empowering Maha Dalit communities and reserved seats for the MBCs in the local bodies. Initiated welfare schemes for Pasmanda Muslims like giving scholarships and pensions, ensuring reservation of seats in local bodies, etc. He has not sidelined the major communities of the state and has without any mistake wooed their sentiments for creating support bases. The new base of MBCs-EBCs-Muslim proved to be a deciding factor towards the survival of the JD (U) combine. Moreover, the chief minister's personality added to its success. He was projected as a visionary leader capable of steering Bihar towards a prosperous future. His popularity increased with some measures such as provision of 50 per cent reservation for women in local bodies, financial grants for girl students scoring more than 60 percent marks, bicycle schemes. Politics surpassing identity markers actually paid dividends for the JD (U) combine. Development and series of initiatives adopted to empower the Extremely Backward Caste (EBCs), Maha Dalits and women paid off manifold for the combine, merely caste based politics finds no more appeal among the people of Bihar[22].

For his second consecutive term he had to meet and live up to the expectations of his people. He had to confront some enormous challenges such as revitalize the

[22] *"Caste dynamics have taken a backseat: Nitish"*, The Hindu, November 25, 2010.

panchayats, problem of implementation had to be met; the allocated funds had to be used judiciously. His government was expected to do away with the problem of corruption and deal the Maoist problem with heavy hands. The state government had to acknowledge the existence of the local level government. The former should establish connection with the latter. During his second tenure the Nitish-led government also had to meet the problem of shortage of electricity to encourage and boost investment and entry of private players, create jobs, unleash land reform measures.

This election has proved that only 'performance' has been the key determining factor in deciding the fate of a political party in a developing country whether at the centre or at the state.

Similar has been the case at centre with UPA coming back to power for the second consecutive term, as well the JD(U) combine witnessed a similar fate. Parties with Pro-people and futuristic visions that can enable the nation or a state to tread the path of development will enjoy people's mandate. The election of 2010 testified a single fact that caste and identity based politics is no more the only appeal among the common people. Common masses aspire for development and a prosperous future and electoral verdict certainly is dependent on it. The visionary and the energetic image of the Cheif Minister has been an added advantage. RJD and LJP wedded to caste and community based politics had nothing more to offer to the people who now urge only for development and progress and peace. They could yield few seats only. But the time to write obituary has not come till now considering its bases among the Yadav and Dussadh communities as well as it had secured 25 percent of the popular votes. In a turn of event Nitish Kumar tendered his resignation owning the responsibility for the dismal performance of the JD (U) in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The Modi wave swept almost the entire country and Bihar was no exception[23]. Meanwhile JD (U) had snapped its long term alliance with BJP[24]. Nitish Kumar had serious reservations about the anointment of Narendra Modi as the prime ministerial candidate for the 2014 Lok Sabha election. After breaking his alliance with BJP prior to general election of 2014, JD (U) entered into an alliance with Congress, CPI and five

[23] *"MLAs back Nitish, Sharad isolated"*, The Hindu, May 19, 2014.
[24] *"BJP not in Nitish Kumar Governmnet anymore, but its leaders refuse to quit post"*, www.ndtv.com, June 27, 2013 (accessed on May 09, 2015 at 09:20 am).

Independents and remained in power in the state[25]. Following Nitish Kumar's resignation, Bihar Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Minister, Jiten Ram Manjhi was installed as the chief minister of the state[26]. Manhji belongs to the Maha Dalit community of the Mushahars. Kumar played his caste equations well and transferred the reign to a lower caste as a gesture to retain the rein of the state machinery in the hands of the lower castes. With this initiative he primarily aspired to win over the EBCs. Manjhi remained in the office from May 20, 2014 till February 22, 2015. After a feud with Manjhi who was reluctant to disown his position and demanded for floor test in the assembly through secret ballot, Nitish Kumar again stepped in as chief minister in February 22, 2015[27]. Manjhi parted ways with JD (U) and formed his own political party Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM). When Manjhi refused to comply with the directives of Nitish Kumar and started to express his opinion and aspire to function independently and assertively and not as a 'puppet' it was then differences arose between Manjhi and Nitish Kumar. Finally, Nitish Kumar returned as chief minister and promised to continue ensuring good governance and social justice to the people of the state.

With the 2015 assembly polls JD (U)-RJD combine came to power with Nitish Kumar as the chief minister[28]. With the 205 assembly polls RJD emerged as the largest party with 80 out of the 101 contested seats polling 18.35 percent of votes and 44.35 percent of seats. The JD (U) bagged 71 seats out of the 101 contested seats with 16.83 percent of votes and 40.65 percent of seats. INC could secure 27 out of the 41 contested seats and BJP could win 53 out of the 157 contested seats with 24.42 percent of votes and 37.48 percent of seats. LJP won 2 out of the 42 contested seats. RLSP bagged two seats and HAMS could win just a single seat (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Grand Alliance of RJD, JD (U) and Congress (I) won 178 seats in a 243 member Assembly, polling 42 percent of votes. NDA stood distant second with 58 seats and Left Parties could secure 3 seats and the Independents bagged 4 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). BJP allied with LJP (represents the Dalits, mostly the Dussadhs), HAM-S (represents the Mahadalits), Rashtriya Lok Samata Party-RLSP represents the Kushwahas, the second most important backward caste in

[25] *"Nitish quits as dissent brews in JD (U)"*, The Hindu, May 18, 2014.
[26] *"Jiten Ram Manjhi is Bihar's New CM"*, The Hindu, May 20, 2014.
[27] *"Nitish to return as CM tomorrow"*, The Hindu, February 21, 2015.
[28] *"Two-third majority for Nitish-Lalu Grand Alliance"*, The Hindu, November 09, 2015.

the state after the Yadavs) in order to consolidate its base among the backward section of the society as well but still it could not reap much benefit. On the contrary the Grand Alliance was much more secular in appeal for the people as BJP has traditionally been a party representing the upper caste and it has been anti-Dalit and anti-Muslim in terms of ideology as well. Grand Alliance was perceived to be a coalition of marginal and subaltern castes. The Yadav-Kurmi-Koeri-Muslim-Mahadalit rallied behind the RJD-JD (U) combine[29]. The JD (U) has been able to establish a strong foothold among the Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs) section of the society with various welfare measures and this section had hence remained loyal to JD (U) for the 2015 assembly election as well. JD (U) affirmed to remain loyal to its policy of ensuring development blended with social justice and hence promised to provide clean water supply to every household, electricity for all the villages, 35 percent of reservation for women in all government jobs, allowance for the unemployed youths and education loan of Rs. 4 lakh to students pursuing higher education (http://nitishkumar.co.in/nitishnishchay.php). Although BJP promised for clean water, electricity to every household, better roads but it solely banked upon Brand Modi and his development model as the sole medium to win over the people of the state (http://www.bjp.org/en/media-resources/press-releases/press-release-regarding-special-package-to-bihar-for-development)[30]. BJP-led NDA lacked a CM face. It projected Narendra Modi who was not locally from Bihar. Hence, Nitish Kumar in the election rallies gave a call to vote for a "*Bihari than a Bahari*" (vote for a Bihari than an outsider)[31]. Thus people of the state failed to identify themselves with NDA. As discernible the electorates preferred governance by Narendra Modi at the central level and voted for Nitish Kumar and his development model for the state level. RJD and JD (U) both are state-based parties whereas BJP traditionally has no such substantial base in the state. Hence for the time being the people of the state remained loyal to the RJD-JD (U) combine and preferred to continue with the governance by the Nitish Kumar-led government thereby ensuring stability to the system. Moreover, some inflammatory remarks also jeopardized the electoral prospects of BJP in the state. The need to review the reservation policy statement of

[29] *"Lalu's M-Y combine proved the game changer"*, The Hindu, November 10, 2015.
[30] Also *See* http://www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2015/highlights_18.8.15.pdf
[31] *"Bihari or Bahari:Nitish Kumar asks voters"*, http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/bihari-or-bahari-nitish-kumar-asks-voters/153137/,October 18, 2015 (accessed at May, 09, 2016 at 07:30 am).

RSS supreme Mohan Bhagat alienated the backward castes, such as the SCs, STs, OBCs and EBCs from the party[32]. A three day meet was also scheduled in Ranchi to discuss religious census of the state also made the backward section insecure about the ulterior motive of BJP. The polarising controversial statement that 'crackers will be burst in Pakistan if BJP losses in Bihar' by Amit Shah in an election rally in the Raxaul region of East Champaran district also affected the vote share of the party[33]. It might have antagonised the Muslims section of the state population. Janata Dal, RJD and JD (U) are such political novices in the state party system that has realigned the party system to a great extent. They have altered the social dynamics of the state. These parties have used caste as one of the important medium for mobilisation. With their emergence no parties has been able to secure absolute majority in the party system as the various caste and communities existing in the society vote in a fragmented pattern based on their allegiance. Congress has never been able to come back to power after the 1962 assembly polls. Alliance politics has been a predominant phenomenon in the state party system since 1967, although Congress was able to restore itself partially in the wake of Indira and Rajiv wave.

The Features of Bihar State Party System

The state party system is a competitive multi-party system. It is marked by coalition politics. Conflict over political opportunities makes the state party system unstable in nature. Large-scale defection and factionalism has led to multiplicity of political parties within the state party system. Caste equations have largely shaped the state party system. In recent times performance of the ruling government and socio-economic development ensured by the government in power has largely determined the course of the state party system. Mobilisation in the name of identity is also prevalent and has affected the evolution of the state party system.

[32] *"BJP distances itself from RSS supremo, Mohan Bhagat's call for Quota Review"*, www.indianexpress.com, September 22, 2015 (accessed at May, 09, 2016 at 09:30 am).
[33] *"Pak will burst crackers if BJP losses: Amit Shah"*, www.deccanherald.com, October 30, 2015 (accessed at May, 09, 2016 at 09:35 am).

Jharkhand

The state of Jharkhand was carved out of the state of Bihar. The state of Jharkhand came into existence following the enactment of the Bihar Reorganisation Act, 2000 on 15th November, 2000 by the Parliament. Historically, the state was under the rule of Raja Jai Singh Deo of Orissa who had declared himself the ruler of Jharkhand in the 13th century. It largely comprises of forest tracks of Chhotanagpur plateau and Santhal Pargana and has distinct cultural traditions. In post-independence era, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) started a regular agitation along with the people of South Bihar for ensuring justice to the tribals of South Bihar and safeguard their economic, political and cultural identity and hegemony over the region from the onslaughts of the non-tribals of North Bihar, mainly the *Dikus* as well as the landlords. Hence, they continued a long struggle in demand for a separate state and this impelled the government to establish the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council in 1995 and finally a full-fledged state came into being in 2000 by an Act of Parliament during the reign of BJP led NDA government at the centre[34]. The present state has been carved out of Bihar by transferring eighteen districts from the state of Bihar to the new state. 81assembly seats have been allocated to the newly created state of Jharkhand, besides a seat has been reserved for Anglo-Indian community. It has a unicameral legislature (http//:www.legislativebodiesinindia.nic.in). After the formation of the state which was carved out of Bihar in 2000 no assembly election was conducted in the state. The state went into polls only in February, 2005. BJP by virtue of their majority with 44 MLAs and one nominated member from the Anglo-Indian community in the new assembly formed the government in the state (Kumar, 2005 p. 346,). Jharkhand is with its first ever assembly polls till the 2014 assembly polls is been marked by a consistently bipolarized competitive multi-party system with coalition governments.

[34] This struggle for a separate state of Jharkhand has a long history that dates back to the colonial times when leaders like Birsa Munda was spearheading the movement for autonomy. This struggle has passed through various phases when numerous revolts were launched to protect their rights over their land and forest and its resources from British encroachment such as the Chaur, Kol, Bhumij and Santhal rebellion. The Jharkhand movement gained momentum with the formation of Adivasi Mahasabha and the Jharkhand Party in 1950. The Union government after independence did not concede to the demand of the tribal leaders for a separate state of Jharkhand. Since 1970 these movement has been primarily driven by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), a splinter group of the Jharkhand Party, under the leadership of Shibu Soren. *See* Arunabha Ghosh, *"Ideology and Politics of Jharkhand Movement: An Overview"*, Vol. 28, No. 35, August 28, 1993.

Babulal Marandi from BJP became the new Chief Minister of the state after an unsuccessful attempt by the JMM supreme, Shibu Soren to form government in the newly formed 28th state of the Indian Union[35]. Marandi remained in the position from November 15, 2000 to March 17, 2003. In March, 2003 he was replaced by Arjun Munda (http//:www.legislativebodiesinindia.nic.in). On March, 13, 2003, the Marandi-led BJP government lost majority in the Assembly following the sudden resignation by seven ministers who crossed the floor after a crucial vote on a financial business. The Opposition insisted on a vote on a cut motion to the demands for grant which the speaker conceded and claimed that there was a voice vote on the cut motion. Mr. Namdhari, the speaker of the assembly forwarded the cut motion to vote. The government lost mandate as the majority of the members supported the cut motion forwarded by the Opposition. The Opposition parties also expressed their willingness to support Mr. Namdhari as the head of the alternative government[36]. It was Arjun Munda, the welfare minister in the Marandi cabinet who staked claim to form the government in Jharkhand along with 40 MLAs and continued in office till March 1, 2005[37].

"Aspiration" remained the sole barometer for mandate

Following the 2005 assembly election to the state of Jharkhand, when the state went into polls for the first time since its formation in 2000, BJP secured 30 seats out of the 63 contested seats, polling 30.19 percent of seats and 23.54 percent of votes. INC bagged 9 of the 41 contested seats, polling 0.43 percent of votes whereas BSP, CPI, CPI (M) drew a blank. State-based parties such as JD (U) secured 6 seats, JMM fetched only 17 seats for itself polling 14.29 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). The NDA-JD (U) combine garnered 36 seats and along with the support of Independents staked claimed to form the government in the state. The Congress-JMM combine too rallied behind and staked claim to form the government in the state as well. However, after a meeting between the Governor Syed Sibtey Razi and JMM leader Shibu Soren the Governor administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Shibu Soren. He was sworn in as the third chief minister of the state and headed a

[35] "*Marandi election a formality*", The Hindu, November 12, 2000.
[36] *"Marandi government loses majority"*, The Hindu, March 14, 2003.
[37] *"Munda stakes claim"*, The Hindu, March 18, 2003.

minority government and was directed to prove his majority in the floor of the assembly. The Governor Syed Sibtey Razi was accused of adopting a policy of favouritism by resorting to a 'delaying tactics' thereby not enabling the NDA-JD (U) leading combine to form the government in the state. A senior BJP leader M. Venkaiah Naidu was quoted alleging the centre where the Congress-led UPA was in power, for putting too much pressure upon the governor in not allowing the NDA to form the government in the state. The UPA-JMM alliance could not fetch absolute majority for itself. Moreover, it suffered a setback following a revolt by senior leader Stephen Marandi against JMM leader Shibu Soren over denial of ticket from the Dumka constituency. It also committed a blunder by not entering into a pre-poll alliance with RJD and Left parties which would have enabled the UPA-JMM combine to soar up its tally of seats and prove its majority in the assembly.[38] However, Soren-led minority government failed to prove his majority in the house and hence was directed to step down and the governor invited Mr. Arjun Munda, the BJP leader, to run the state government. He remained in office from March 12, 2005 till September 14, 2006. The 18 month long government of Munda lost majority in the floor of the assembly after few of its MLAs deserted government. Madhu Koda, the Minister of Mines, in the Munda government was responsible for bringing down the government along with three other independent MLAs. Arjun Munda opted not to go for the floor test and rather forwarded his resignation to the governor leading to the fall of the BJP-led government. It was replaced by the non-NDA Madhu Koda-led government. He was an independent MLA who was chosen to lead the coalition comprising of parties like Congress and RJD. Koda also enjoyed the support of four Independent MLAs from parties like United Gomantwadi Democratic Party, CPI (ML), Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) and Forward Bloc[39]. He remained in office from September 18, 2006 till August 24, 2008. However, in a turn of event, JMM led by Shibu Soren withdrew its support from the Madhu Koda government for its alleged involvement in a money laundering case on August 17, 2008 following which the government lost its majority in the assembly[40]. The state was engulfed under horrifying incidents of Maoist

[38] *"Governor Installs Soren, NDA up in arms"*, The Hindu, March 3, 2005.
[39] *"Madhu Koda to lead UPA government"*, The Hindu, September 16, 2006.
[40] *See* Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, *"The War Zone"*, Frontline, Vol. 26, Issue. 22, October 27 - November 06, 2009.

onslaughts[41] which included beheading of police officer and it had invited a nationwide outrage. Due to these incidents Koda government became unpopular in the state. Finally, Koda had to tender his resignation and was succeeded by Soren himself and he remained in office from August 17, 2008 till January 12, 2009[42]. After his defeat in the Tamar by-polls Soren had to step down from the post of chief minister in January 2009 following which Mr. Champai Soren was elected the chief of JMM and the chief ministerial candidate. Soren vacated his Dumka Lok Sabha seat and was seeking for a seat in the assembly within the stipulated six months after assuming the office of the chief minister of the state in August, 2008. His defeat in the Tamar constituency in the by-election inflicted a severe blow to the party in the state. UPA did not budge to the JMM's choice of Champai Soren as the chief minister and this led to the downfall of the government. The state then came under President's rule for a year as no political party staked claim to form government in the state[43].

A five phase assembly election was held in the state during the month of November and December 2009. The 2009 assembly polls were fought mainly based on two issues- 'corruption' and 'stable government'[44]. Considering the involvement of the Madhu Koda government in money laundering scam worth Rs. 4000 crore approximately by facilitating illegal mining contracts of iron ore and coal, the issue of 'corruption' occupied a significant position in the electoral campaign of the 2009 assembly polls[45]. Following the fall of two consecutive governments in a span of less than five years and a year of President's rule in the state, 'stability' became another significant issue of the election campaign. The poll bound Jharkhand was presented with plethora of promises by all the prime contenders of power which in general included provision of food grains at subsidized rates, electrification of villages, stable and corruption free government, culmination of Maoist violence in the state, assurance of resolving the problem of displacement and assurance for tribal development.

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[41] *See* Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, *"The War Zone"*, Frontline, Vol. 26, Issue. 22, October 27 - November 06, 2009.
[42] *"Madhu Koda resigns"*, The Hindu, August 28, 2008.
[43] *"Sibhu Soren, Deputy CM resigns"*, Outlook, January 12, 2009.
[44] *"Fractured Verdict in Jharkhand"*, The Hindu, December 29, 2009.
[45] *See* Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, *"Deep pockets of Jharkhand"*, Frontline, Vol. 26, Issue. 24, November 26 –December 04, 2009.

With the 2009 assembly election to the state of Jharkhand, BJP secured 18 of the 67 contested seats with 24.44 percent of seats and 20.44 percent of votes. BSP, CPI (M) and NCP drew a blank. INC could fetch for itself 14 of the 61 contested seats with 21.43 percent of seats and 16.16 percent of votes. State based party such as JD (U) could secure just two seats, AJSU and RJD won five seats respectively and JMM bagged for itself 18 of the 78 contested seats polling 15.79 percent of seats and 15.20 percent of votes. Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) of Babulal Marandi, a political novice in the state formed in 2006 and a break-away group from BJP, could win only 11 seats with 28.24 percent of seats and 8.99 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Clearly, no political party was able to get absolute majority in the assembly. The election produced a hung assembly. JMM played a key role in the formation of the government as neither Congress-JVM alliance nor BJP- JD (U) combine could garner absolute majority for themselves. However, it was Shibu Soren of JMM in alliance with BJP ultimately formed the government in the state and remained in power from December 30, 2009 till May 31, 2010. JMM did not settle for anything less than the post of chief minister for its leader. However, his five month long rule came to an end after BJP and JD (U) withdrew its support from the Soren-led government. It was reduced to a minority government but it failed to muster sufficient number in the assembly as Congress and its ally JVM refused to extend its support to Shibu Soren. Hence, Jharkhand again got engulfed into political instability. With no one staking claim to form a government in the state Governor M.O.H Farooq sent a report to the Union Home Ministry to impose President's rule in the state[46]. The President rule continued till September 2010. On September11, 2010, Arjun Munda was sworn in to lead the eighth state government in the state after he expressed his desire to form the government along with the support of parties like JMM and AJSU. Congress and its ally JVM staked no claim to form the government in the state and sat as opposition in the assembly. The Munda government remained in power till January 18, 2013. Jharkhand was again placed under President's rule after the Arjun Munda Government was reduced to a minority government after the withdrawal of support by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)[47]following disagreement over power-sharing. Hemant Soren, son of Shibu Soren became the ninth chief minister of the state. He headed a coalition government led by JMM in alliance with Congress, RJD, other

[46] *"Congress welcomes Soren's Resignation"*, The Hindu, May 31, 2010.
[47] *"President's rule imposed in Jharkhand"*, The Hindu, January 19, 2013.

small parties and Independents. His government remained in power till December 12, 2014[48]. A five phase poll was announced on November 25, 2014.

With the 2014 assembly polls BJP could win 37 of the 72 contested seats polling 35.16 percent of seats and 31.26 percent of votes. INC performed abysmally poor by securing 6 of the 62 contested seats with 13.98 percent of seats and 10.46 percent of votes. JMM, the state based party could bag just 19 seats for itself with 20.93 percent of seats and 20.43 percent of votes. JVM, the political novice of the state could fetch for itself only eight seats. With the 2014 election BJP came to power by toppling Congress-JMM coalition government. The duo broke their alliance for the 2014 assembly polls following the Congress's poor performance in the state and due to its loss of incredibility among the common masses following its association with numerous corruption scams and scandals. BJP along with its ally AJSU formed the government in the state. The combine could garner 42 seats in the 82 member assembly. Raghuvar Das is heading the BJP-AJSU coalition government in the state. The people of Jharkhand have reposed their faith in the BJP to free themselves from the corrupt governance and in the hope of development and stability. The aura of Narendra Modi, the sculpted icon of development for the Lok Sabha election 2014 has cast its spell in the state of Jharkhand as well[49].

The Features of the Jharkhand State Party System

The politics of the state of Jharkhand is largely marked by factionalism and internal squabbles over power sharing and seat sharing. The petty interests of the local leaders dominate the state politics thereby making the interest of the tribals and their development irrelevant for the political leaders. The political leaders tend to further their political aspirations rather than promoting the development of the mineral rich state. The state was created to safeguard and promote the interest of the tribals rather it is now crippled by issues like Maoism, unemployment, underdevelopment, lack of availability of basic facilities to the people (mostly, the tribals), illiteracy, poverty and hunger, deprivations among the masses, etc. Successive governments have invited investments in mining and power sector to serve their petty interests and amass large

[48] "*LD Jharkhand"*, The Hindu, July 14, 2013.
[49] *"Jharkhand gives clear verdict"*, The Hindu, December 24, 2014.

amount of wealth. Land grabbing and clearance of forest areas by corporate giants have only increased the problems of the masses making displacement a serious issue in the state. Hence, development indices have suffered a massive decline. Coalition government has become the predominant form of government in the state. The state party system is marked by multiplicity of political parties. The party system is also largely affected by the problem of defection which has been rampant in all the successive governments. JMM is synonymous with the creation of the state of Jharkhand to protect and promote the interests of the tribals from the onslaughts of outsiders. However, the party largely stands deviated from its goal and its supreme leader, Shibu Soren is mostly linked up with charges of corruption and scams as well as criminal charges. He is also alleged to have not promoted the interests of the tribals but rather his own political ambitions thereby encouraging dynastic politics. Hence, it could not usher its electoral fortune in the state as was expected. The contest for state mantle has largely revolved around three main political parties, namely Congress, BJP and JMM. Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM), a political novice in the state of Babulal Marandi (who was an important leader of BJP of the Jharkhand state unit) emerged as a marginally significant force in the state since its formation in 2006. With its first entry into the electoral battle it could win just 11 seats out of the 25 contested seats mainly making inroads in the constituency of BJP. It won from Poreyahat, Simaria, Dhanwar, Jamua, Sindri which was initially won by BJP in the 2005 assembly polls. It also occupied the constituency of Maheshpur, Giridh, Ichagarh in 2009 which was earlier won by JMM in 2005 assembly election. In 2009, JVM also won from Bokaro which had been earlier won by INC in 2005. It replaced JD (U) and occupied the Baghmara constituency in 2009 and RJD from the Garhwa constituency (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the 2014 assembly polls JVM retained Poreyahat and Simara constituency. JVM also won from Sarath constituency which earlier was won by RJD in 2005 assembly election and by JMM in 2009 assembly election. It grabbed the Barakatha constituency in 2014 from BJP from where the latter won in both 2005 and 2009 assembly polls. It also grabbed the Hatia constituency from INC which was won by the latter in both 2005 and 2009 assembly polls. It also occupied Chandankyari from where JMM had won in 2005 and AJSU in 2009. Latehar also voted in favour of JVM in 2014 which was earlier won by RJD in 2005 and by BJP in

2009 assembly polls. Daltonganj too voted in favour of JVM in 2014 assembly polls. Earlier it voted in favour of JD (U) in 2005 and INC in 2009 (http://www.eci.nic.in).

West Bengal

West Bengal lies at the eastern end of the Gangetic plains and is one of the two states (the other being Tripura) which had been under the leftist rule for more than three decades considering the fact that the Left does not have a strong national base in India. Hence the state of West Bengal deserves attention so that the factors can be traced to locate the reasons for the persistent Leftist rule in the state as well its debacle that largely made an impact upon the state party system of West Bengal. With the first state election since independence in 1952 Congress remained in power in the state with 150 seats with 38.82 percent of votes and 38.93 percent of seats whereas CPI could bag just 28 seats and BJS secured 9 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress formed the government in the state headed by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy[50]. The state remained under the rule of Congress party uninterruptedly till 1967 under the leadership of Dr. B.C Roy (http://www.wbassembly.gov.in

. Hence the state of West Bengal exhibited a competitive multi-party system with the predominance of the Congress Party. In 1957 state election the Congress secured 152 seats polling 46.14 percent of votes and 46.20 percent of seats whereas CPI could bag just 28 seats and with the 1962 state election the Congress captured 157 seats with 47.29 percent of votes and 47.29 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). However, after the death of Dr. B.C Roy, Shri Prafulla Chandra Sen, the most trusted political associate of Dr. B.C Roy, succeeded him as the chief minister of the state.

However, with the 1967 state election, the Congress was replaced by the Bangla Congress-led anti-Congress opposition Front. The entire country was almost swept by

[50] Prior to Dr. B.C Roy, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh was the chief minister of the state from 15th August, 1947 till 22nd January, 1948. He was the popular choice of the Congress High Command for the august post but he soon became unpopular among many of the Congress leaders of West Bengal and the Marwari industrialist community of Calcutta for his rigid style of administration and was finally ousted from the position of the chief minister of the state. Ghosh was replaced by Dr. B. C Roy who was favoured by Nehru, Patel and the industrialists and he finally formed the ministry on 23rd January 1948 and he continued in office even after independence and served as the chief minister of the state till 1st July, 1962. Shortly after his resignation Ghosh left Congress along with 100 other Congressmen and formed the Krishak Praja Mazdoor Party (Peasants, People and Workers Party) which later on combined with other parties to form the Praja Socialist Party (PSP).

the anti–Congress tide and this led to the change of guard in the state as well. With the 1967 assembly election the state party system entered into a bipolarized competitive multi-party system with coalition government. Many of the congress leaders of the state defected from the party and joined the Bangla Congress. Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee of the Sen-Ghosh group came into confrontation with Atulya Ghosh who was one of the most influential leaders of West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee[51] and following the rift Mukherjee left the Congress party to form his own Bangla Congress[52]. The United Front which was formed by a coalition of fourteen parties and an independent came to power in the state with Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee as the chief minister on 1st March 1967 and he remained in power till 21st November, 1967. The United Front consisted of two major blocs of parties namely the People's United Left Front (PULF) led by the CPI and the United Left Front (ULF) led by the CPI (M). These two fronts came together to provide a united opposition to the Congress party in the state and were able to assimilate the cooperation of all the Marxist left parties in the state as well as of the Bangla Congress and the SSP along with the Gurkha League, the Lok Sevak Sangh and the PSP (Franda, 1969, p. 291).

Following the 1967 state election Congress was for the first time reduced to the role of an opposition party in the assembly. It managed to get just 127 seats out of 280 assembly seats polling 41.13 percent of votes and 41.13 percent of seats. The ULF together secured 68 seats of which CPI (M) alone secured 43 seats with 18.11 percent of votes and 36.14 percent of seats, while the PULF together secured 65 seats with Bangla Congress winning 34 seats and CPI bagging 16 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in). However, the first United Front government was dislodged from power when Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and 17 other legislator resigned from the ministry and formed a government under the banner of Progressive Democratic Alliance (PDA)[53] with the support of the Congress party on 21st November 1967. However, the 88-day ministry was replaced by the second United Front government

[51] *See* Marcus F. Franda, *"West Bengal"* in Myron Weiner (ed.), *"State Politics in India"*, 1967, pp. 271-283.

[52] The Bangla Congress, a then political novice in the state, spearheaded the significant realignment in the party system by drawing an end to the continuous rule of the Congress party in the state and reconfiguring the state party system by ousting the Congress from the reign of the state mantle. It became the part of the United Front ministry and its leader remained the chief minister of the state during the late sixties.

[53] Progressive Democratic Alliance was declared unconstitutional by the Speaker of the Assembly and Ghosh had no other option but to tender his resignation and thereafter a President's rule was imposed in the state.

on 25th February 1969 following the mid-term poll of the West Bengal State assembly (http://www.wbassembly.gov.in)

After a brief period of President's rule in the state in 1968 the same coalition of parties that had earlier fell apart in less than nine months came back to power in the state after the assembly polls of February 1969 with much larger number of seats. The Congress with the mid-term poll was again reduced to a minority government in the state with 55 seats in the assembly of 280 seats polling 41.32 percent of votes the CPI (M) won 80 out of the 97 seats with 19.97 percent of votes and 54.12 percent of seats whereas the CPI would bag just 30 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). With the mid-term poll, the United Front ministry came back to power but could not complete its term and it collapsed following the sudden resignation that was tendered by the chief minister Ajoy Mukherjee. The state then came under President's rule.

In 1971 the state conducted its sixth assembly polls and CPI (M) emerged as the largest party with 113 seats polling 32.86 percent of votes and 37.42 percent of seats. CPI could secure just 13 seats and Congress won 105 seats with 29.19 percent of votes and 34.91 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). However, the CPI (M) was not provided with the opportunity to form the government in the state but the Congress was provided with an opportunity by the then Governor, following the direction from the Union government, to form the government in the state under the leadership of Ajoy Mukherjee who had by then rejoined Congress. However, the government again collapsed without completing its term and for the third time President's rule was imposed in the state (http://www.wbassembly.gov.in).

.The electoral base of the Congress party had weakened in the state due to its split in 1966 and defection of many congress leaders, factionalism and friction among prominent leaders of the party are some of the reasons for the downfall of the Congress party in the state. The United Front was a coalition of numerous parties that had come under a single banner to provide opposition to the veteran Congress party in the state. However, it failed to emerge as a potential alternative in the state because it lacked in unity on policy issues, issues of political strategy, it also lacked in terms of organizational coherence and ideological affinity. It was infected with internal dissensions and disagreements. The Congress recovered its lost bastion with 1972 state election following the overall resurgence of Congress party at the national level

by winning 216 seats out of the 238 contested seats, polling 49.08 percent of votes and 58.35 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Besides, numerous factors like Ajoy Mukherjee of Bangla Congress himself rejoined the Congress party, the alliance of Congress with CPI, the incorporation of socialism in the ideals, promise for devolution of central fund in the development of the state and its infrastructure if voted back to power in the state, elevation in the stature of Indira Gandhi as a national leader due to her role in the Bangladesh liberation war positively contributed towards the resurgence of the Congress party in the state electoral map (Dasgupta, 1972, pp. 805-806). Moreover, although the people of Bengal twice rejected Congress and bestowed United Front the opportunity to rule the state but on all the occasions since 1967 to 1971 their expectations were bulldozed as the United Front failed to provide governance to the people, neither did they introduce pro-people administration in the state. On the contrary, the disparate Front remained riddled with rivalries and factionalism with regard to issues like land reform, industrial relation, law and order situation, etc. Hence the people of Bengal failed to find an alternative for themselves and therefore provided another chance to Congress to rule the state. Congress during its 1971 election campaign promised for overall development in the state including eradication of unemployment problem in the state. It remained in power in the state till April, 1977 under the leadership of Shri Siddhartha Sankar Ray. However, there was loss in the glory of Congress in the entire country following the series of events during the President's rule in the country during the Indira Gandhi-led Congress (I) regime at the central level. However, since 1977 state election, the electoral base of the Congress in the state deteriorated significantly and the CPI (M)-led Left Front came to power in the state with Shri Jyoti Basu as its chief minister with 178 seats polling 35.46 percent of votes and 46.23 percent of seats whereas INC could bag just 20 seats with 23.02 percent of votes and 23.39 percent of seats. CPI could win just 2 seats and Janata Party which was then in power at the centre could win just 29 seats in the assembly polls (http://www.eci.nic.in). The state party system continued to remain bipolarized in nature and exhibited a competitive multi-party system with coalition governments till 2016. The left Front came to power in the state with CPI (M) as its leading partner with Jyoti Basu as the chief minister of the state. Jyoti Basu emerged to become the longest serving chief minister by coming to power consecutively five times till November, 2000.

The people of Bengal severely punished Congress for its misrule, lawlessness and brutal repression, for unleashing tyrannical rule in the state in its fanatic attempt to withhold its base, for its ideological degeneration, for meting out atrocities upon the common people, for not being able to provide pro-people governance laced with social justice to the people of the state. Ray's tenure was marked by police atrocities which included killing of thousand of naxal[54] youths and CPI (M) cadres, deaths in police custody, incidence of indiscriminate police firing on democratic movement and rallies, suspension of civil liberties and democratic rights and extreme highhandedness of the arrogant party cadres (Acharya, 1999, pp. 2298-2299).

The Invincible CPI (M)-led Left Front (1977-2011)

Left consolidated its base by stabilizing its support in the rural areas which comprises of the landless agricultural labourers, the poor peasants and urban poor (Chaudhuri, 1987, p.1230). By adopting land reform measures, distributing land to the landless agricultural labourers and the poor, adopting and implementing of Operation Barga[55] and food for work programme which ensured employment to the rural poor in lean months and revitalization and creation of new popular institutions in the state in the form of three-tier panchayat (decentralization) system which in turn had generated employments for local youths and landless labours, declaration of pro-worker policy,

[54] In 1967 a peasant uprising took place in the Naxalbari region of the Darjeeling district in West Bengal under the leadership of the local cadres of CPI (M). Gradually this movement popularly known as the Naxalite movement started to spread in other parts of the country. In 1969, CPI (M) suffered a split and the militant faction formed a new party known as Communist Part of India (Marxist-Leninist). It adopted the strategy of guerilla warfare to fight against the administration. The Naxalite movement has used force to snatch land from rich landowners and give it to poor and the landless. It adopted violent means to achieve their goal. Congress led state administration took stern measures to pacify and uproot this movement. Insecure tenancies, denial of share in produce, exploitation of moneylenders, forced labour, exorbitant rents are some of the immediate causes that led to the growth of the Naxalite movement.

[55] The left consolidated its base with Operation *Barga* which achieved some success in improving the conditions of the rural peasantry after the abysmal failure of the *Tebhaga* movement of 1946-47 and 1948-49. The *Tebhaga* Movement sought to increase the distribution of the produce in favour of the tenant from half to two-thirds. However, it could not achieve much success. The Operation *Barga* which was relaunched to improve the conditions of the tillers of soil and through it names of the sharecroppers were recorded through group action and security of tenure was ensured to the *bargadars* (who were person lawfully cultivating the lands of another person, namely, the landowners). Moreover, their rights over the land they were tiling were made inheritable and fair share of produce were ensured and this raised their sense of security, solidarity and power among the agricultural labourers as well as curtailed the exploitative consequences meted out by the big landowners. *See* D. Bandyopadhyay, *"Tebhaga Movement in Bengal: A Retrospect"*, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 41, Oct. 13-19, 2001, pp. 3901-3907.

setting up number of primary and secondary schools as well as colleges, making education free till the secondary stage, increasing emoluments of teachers at all levels, the Left Front was able to build some credibility for itself among the people of Bengal (Chaudhuri, 1987, p.1230).

The CPI (M)-led Left Front was able to repeat its term with the 1982 assembly election with 172 seats out of the 209 contested seats and 34.49 percent of votes and 53.77 percent of seats whereas INC could garner only 49 out of the 250 contested seats, polling 35.73 percent of votes and 42.08 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The left front was consistently voted back to power with the subsequent assembly elections of 1987, 1991 and 1996[56]. The CPI (M)-led left front emerged as the largest party with 187 seats, polling 39.30 percent of votes and 53.61 percent of seats in 1987 election whereas INC secured only 40 seats, BJP drew a blank and CPI scored 11 seats. In 1991 assembly polls the Left Front's leading party again emerged as the leading party with189 seats with 36.87 percent of votes and 49.88 percent of seats whereas INC scored 43 seats. With 1996 state election the CPI (M) secured 157 out of 213 contested seats polling 37.92 percent of votes and 50.48 percent of seats and INC bagged 82 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

However, with the 2001 assembly polls the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), the then political novice in the state of West Bengal, made inroads in the state party system[57]. Moreover, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya succeeded Jyoti Basu as the seventh chief minister of the state. Jyoti Basu failed to continue to serve the state because of his deteriorating health conditions[58]. Under the leadership of Buddhadev Bhattacharya, the CPI (M)-led Left Front came to power in the state for the sixth time consecutively with the 2001 state election securing more than 200 of the 294 assembly seats. The CPI (M) secured 143 seats out of the 211 seats polling 36.59

[56] Left could consolidate its base in the initial years with the aid of rural teachers who were either member of the party or of their frontal organisations. These teachers help the Left to build its base due to their amicable relationship based on trust with the parents of their students and other villagers among whom they earned immense respect. Rural voters had been the primary support base of the Left parties, primarily the CPI (M). The base constitute of the farmers, agricultural workers, skilled and semi-skilled workers of the production sector of the rural areas, the disadvantageous sections of the society such as the SCs, STs, Muslims and the woman. *See* Dwaipayan Bhattacharya, *"Left in the Lurch: The Demise of the World's Longest Elected Regime?",* Economic and Political weekly, Vol. 45 No. 3, January 16-22, 2010.

[57] This political novice in the long run initiated the biggest change in the state party system by coming to power in the state and relegating the CPI (M)-led Left Front which had enjoyed a long spell of power in the state to the position of an 'opposition' party.

[58] *"Buddhadev sworn in as Bengal CM"*, The Hindu, November 07, 2000.

percent of votes and 49.96 percent of seats. Among the Front partners Forward Bloc secured 25 seats, RSP secured 17 seats, the West Bengal Socialist Party secured four seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The principal opposition partner the AITC[59] contested the polls in alliance with Congress and could bag 60 seats out of the 226 contested seats polling 30.66 percent of votes and 39.42 percent of seats. INC secured only 26 seats with 7.98 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in) [60]. The state economy was in doldrums with stagnant growth in the industrial sectors, inadequate funds at the disposal of the state, the state had also failed to attract abundant foreign investment. Hence, Buddhabed Bhattacharya during his era adopted new pragmatic approach of 'continuity' and 'change' by intricately integrating elements of capitalism and socialism to suit the changing needs of the era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). He unleashed an 'open door policy' for encouraging investment and adopted a new economic policy of 2006 with increased thrust upon industrialization and entrepreneurship. He had expressed his willingness to generate employment opportunities through privatization and assured investors of infrastructural development. He undertook an initiative to create conducive peaceful environment to carry out business in the state and for administrative revamp to ensure easy and hassle frees functioning of the big industries. He had also encouraged setting up of agro-based industries and tried to improve urban facilities to facilitate smooth operation of business with new airports, sea ports, etc. He did earn laudable appreciation from big industrialists. These measures rekindled hope and aspirations of the progress-minded urban and young population and hence the party could create a new base for itself by bringing into the fold the urban middle class and young population within its traditional base of agricultural labourers, peasants ad workers. He gave a call to reform, perform or perish to his fellow comrades and requested them to embrace the change. The catchphrase "Agriculture Our Foundation and Industry Our Future" coined by Left Front during the 2006 state election campaign could cut a niche in people's mind (Basu, 2007, pp. 292-304). Bhattacharjee vowed to accelerate progress in agriculture, ensure greater industrialization with emphasis on the need for enhanced investment as well improve the conditions of people living below the line of poverty and improve the work culture among the government employees in the state.

[59] The AITC came into existence in January 1st 1998 following a break up in the West Bengal unit of the Congress.
[60] *"Left Front retains Bengal"*, The Hindu, May 14, 2001.

He insisted that the need of the hour was to go for greater reform and drastic changes in the policies of the administration[61].

The Left Front returned back to power for the seventh consecutive time with the 2006 assembly polls completing a rule of three decades in the state. The CPI (M) secured 176 seats out of the 212 contested polling 37.13 percent of votes and 50.83 percent of seats. The other partners of the Front such as the RSP secured 20 seats, the Forward Bloc secured 23 seats. The Trinamool Congress bagged only 30 of the 257 contested seats and INC could fetch only 21 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Buddhadeb Bhattacharya-led Left Front remained in power till 2011. He did attract some investment, the cities were fast changing and new flyovers, plazas, townships, multiplexes were cropping up and the IT sector was proliferating along with numerous other changes. However, he was ousted out of power with the 2011 assembly polls by the principal opposition party in the state, the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), a break-away group from the Congress party which came into existence in 1997 and it has always provided a violent opposition to many of the government's loopholes in the state under the energetic and fiery leadership of Mamata Banerjee.

Why did the CPI (M)-led Left Front Faltered?

In West Bengal the unchallenged rule of Left Front for almost three decades witnessed a severe blow and this became evident from the 2009 Lok Sabha polls itself[62]. The left front was cut to size by the Congress-Trinamool alliance which secured 25 seats out of 42 leaving 16 seats for the left front; significant looser was the CPI (M) which could bag only 9 seats in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls

[61] "A vote for development, says Buddhadeb", The Hindu, May 12, 2006.

[62] The key to survival of the Left front is the well build network between the party and its frontal organisation which functions tirelessly in maintaining a liaison between the government and the people by securing benefits, addressing problems related to various sectors and occupation and by influencing policy-making with day-to-day inputs (Chakraborty, 2006, p. 3524). These frontal organisation provide inexplicable performance during election campaign by mobilising voters in favour of the Left Front. The full-time cadre work tirelessly to ensure victory for the front. The employees of the secondary and tertiary sectors owe and invisible allegiance to the Left parties, more particularly, the CPI (M). Frontal organisations like All Bengal Teacher's Association, West Bengal College and University Teacher's Association, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, Krishak Sabha, Student's Federation of India, DYFI play a crucial role in sustaining and consolidating the base of the Left in the state. Besides, unorganised and divided opposition is another crux towards the survival of the left front. Absence of any other potential alternative was another reason for the uninterrupted reign of the Left in the state for 34 years.

(http://www.eci.nic.in). The left were extending issue based support from outside to the earlier Congress-led UPA Government which came to power with 2004 Lok Sabha polls but suddenly 6 months prior to the expiry of the term of the Lok Sabha they withdrew their support and brought a no-confidence motion opposing UPA's economic reforms programmes and the Indo-US Nuclear Deal as the major threat for the country. The left front realized that they were gradually losing ground among the voters, even in their home grounds of West Bengal and Kerala and thus in their attempt of regaining lost ground and with their so called pro-people image they took the risk of withdrawing support and going to the general election. Apparently such action of the Left front did not leave any positive impact, as they could not convince people and convey their reasons of refuting the harmful consequences of the economic reforms and the nuclear deal[63].

Although the attempt of industrialization as a means of stimulating growth and creating employment opportunities was seen to be a step of appreciation[64], the Left Front Government of West Bengal, under Chief Minster Mr. Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, went about doing it in a wrong way. It tried to be dictatorial and did not feel the need to answer and explain the merits and advantages to its people about the steps that was about to be taken by them. It attempted to acquire productive land of farmers for the "Nano" project of Tata Motors in Singur and for Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Nandigram. It even used force in its own way to evict owners of the land and displayed arrogance only to antagonize a large section of people of West Bengal. Further, the party's irresponsible cadres extended aggressive support to the government's misguided policy and the State Police remained either a mute spectator or an active supporter[65]. The government lost the sustained support of the rural masses, which has always been its strength and alienated itself from the urban intellectual base[66]. The coercive action of the state government towards acquiring 400 acres of land at Singur from unwilling farmers was resented by the peasants and landless labourers. Ms Mamata Banerjee and Trinamool Congress with others took advantage of the situation and were able to mobilize people against the State Government and the CPI (M) party in particular. She went on a 25 day hunger strike

[63] *"Buddhadeb will have to play a major role: Basu"*, The Hindu, May 12, 2006.
[64] *"Industry lauds Left Front Victory"*, The Hindu, May 12, 2006.
[65] "Mamata demands dismissal of Left Front government", The Hindu, March 14, 2007.
[66] "Singur, Nandigram were our biggest mistake: Buddhadeb", www.ndtv.com, April 18, 2011 (accessed on March 07, 2016 at 9:30 am).

to press for party's demand to return land to the landowners[67]. The land acquisition controversy accelerated when incidents of violence started to spread in adjoining areas of Nandigram, Khejuri, Netai village[68] in the Lalgarh area of West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district where local residents protested and this led to bloody clashes between local residents, opposition cadres, activists and the state Police against the land acquisition grab of the Buddhadeb-led state government[69]. Violent clashes between CPI-M and TMC cadres took place over the return of people displaced by violence in Kejuri near Nandigram[70]. The general populace felt disgruntled about the role of state Police and the administration and these was adequately exploited by opposition party, the Trinamool Congress in giving her party a 'pro-people' image. She organized agitations, gheraos, demonstrations and hunger strikes against land grab for industries and SEZs and immediately could make substantial inroads into rural Bengal and gain moral support among the urban population as well.

The utter failure of the government in the implementation of NREGA scheme in West Bengal, large-scale privatization of education and health-care, failure in reviving the traditional and manufacturing industries such as tea, jute, textile, etc., full-scale assault of Public Distribution System (PDS) and also the manner in which the Rizwanur Rahaman case was dealt with, increased the wrath of common people. The entire episode projected the tainted picture of the administration. Improper handling of Rizwanur case[71] drew enough ire of the Muslim population. The Kolkata Police failed to abide by its duty and punish the culprit and instead helped the alleged culprits in concealing the facts related to the murder case[72]. Coupled with it the *madrassas* (Islamic religious centres) were labeled as dens of terrorism and campaign were launched to marginalize them under the tenure of Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya in 2007 (Chakraborty, 2011, p.304). As expected, left front performed

[67] "Buddhadeb renews offer on talks", The Hindu, Dec. 28, 2006.
[68] "Seven killed in Lalgarh Violence", The Hindu, January 08, 2011.
[69] "11 killed in Nandigram police firing", The Hindu, March 15, 2007.
[70] *"Tension near Nandigram",* The Hindu, November 26, 2010.
[71] The influential Todi family residing in Bengal who are Hindu never endorsed Rizwanur Rehman's (a muslim) marriage with their daughter. It has been alleged that Rizwanur was abated to commit suicide. The case is pending before the judiciary.
[72] "Calcutta High Court to hear Rizwanur Rehman Case", Jan. 11, 2008, www.articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com (accessed on March 07, 2016 at 11:50 am).

dismally in North & South 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda and Birbhum which have a high density of Muslim population[73].

Moreover, the alliance of Congress and TMC managed to accumulate all the anti-left votes in their favour which led to electoral downfall of the left. Cadre-based organizational structure, the hitherto strength of the left parties, over a period of time dissociated themselves from community works and social services. Cadres, holding posts of key functionaries at grass-root levels, started thinking to be the lords of the areas under their command, turned corrupt by virtue of the party being in power for a long spell and ignored all the issues relating to welfare of common masses only to invite wrath, unacceptability and a crashing downfall. Complacency grasped the entire party base and they took governance very lightly. Growing party control in many spheres such as appointment and transfer of government employees in service and educational sectors, undue advantage and favours to its party supporters had led to rise in unpopularity of the CPI (M) led Left Front rule in the state. Industrial stagnation led to growing index of unemployment and underemployment among the urban working class, lower middle class, and the youth. Frequent lock-outs, retrenchment, closure and suspension of work in factories and industrial unit are some of the factors which acted as catalyst towards growing dissatisfaction about the Left rule in the state (Dasgupta, 1998, pp. 1116-1117). In addition to these West Bengal was in fiscal deficit with a debt burden of about Rs. 1.92 lakh crore and hence the economy of the state was in gloomy condition. Apart from the issue of corruption practice among the ration shop dealers under the Public Distribution System (PDS), allegation of nepotism and favouritism against the CPI (M) party in general as well as against the CPI (M)-led state government, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee can certainly be charged for his arrogance, complacency and an extremely insufficient knowledge of present-day social dynamics. Results of election have established that the electorate rejected, rather disbelieved, the main campaign of the Left that Trinamool Congress was coming in the way of developmental prospects. A large number of people in India might be illiterate but their political verdicts have always carried significance and strength.

[73] On the status of Muslim, *See* Abhijit Dasgupta, *"On the Margins: Muslims in West Bengal"*, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 44, No. 16, April 18-25, 2009.

Rise of TMC in the State Party System

These drawbacks of the CPM further jeopardized the position of the party in the state and contributed positively towards the electoral growth of TMC in the state. Trinamool Congress emerged as a major player in the state and was believed to be the sole party who can fight the high-handedness of the Left leaders. It projected itself as the prty of the downtrodden people who can ensure social justice to the people. TMC emerged as an alternative for the people of Bengal after a long spell of years under the enigmatic leadership of Mamata Banerjee. The people of Bengal remained haunted for years with the authoritarian rule of the Ray-led Congress government during the seventies and were highly disenchanted by the rule of both the United Front Governments during the late sixties and early seventies. The magic of "Brand Buddha" seemed to gradually wane away and the imaginations of the common masses got gradually painted with the rhetoric of change and development. Mamata Banerjee undertook a frivolous campaign to take the message of her party across the length and breadth of the state and assured an administration that will work for the people and ensure good governance and vowed to ensure an administration for *"Ma, Mati, Manush"* (A party which stands for Mother, Land, People). She gave a call for change and vowed to tread the path of progress and development but not at the cost of poor farmers and rural population. She even affirmed that she wishes to pursue politics of *poribortan* (change) and not politics of *protishod* (revenge). The party manifesto spoke about reconstructing and revitalizing Bengal. The manifesto also assured to revive the industrial sector by making every attempt to attract large investments in the sector of tea, jute, steel and other areas with focus on employment generation. The party also expressed its intention to create employment with focus on labour intensive sectors, revamp healthcare sectors with multifacility hospitals in each sub-division and multiply diagnostic centers. The manifesto reflected the party's intention to undertake massive infrastructure building programmes with focus on rural roads and state highways and undertake farmer centric rural development programme, restore financial health of the state through restoration of state finances. It assured to rejuvenate state culture to one of hope and innovation with a people-friendly administration. It declared its intention to develop industrial town with focus on Public Private Partnership (PPP) and revive micro, medium and small enterprise using IT technologies, financial advice through collective marketing structures as well as

modernize jute mills. The manifesto reflected the intention of the party to revitalize the education sector set up new universities, colleges, schools and unfurl an education system based on merit and not based on cadre raj. The party through its manifesto assured to solve Darjeeling statehood demand problem and develop Jangalmahal and ensure basic services in these areas[74]. With the 2011 assembly election the Trinamool Congress came to power in the state drawing an end to an unchallenged rule of the CPI (M)-led Left Front rule in the state of West Bengal. Trinamool Congress secured 184 seats out of the 226 seats polling 38.93 percent of votes and 50.15 percent of seats. CPI (M) could bag just 40 seats with 30.08 percent of votes and 41.39 percent of seats whereas INC could capture only 42 seats and CPI could win two seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). TMC fought the 2011 assembly election in an alliance with the Congress and Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist). Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress was unanimously elected by the people of Bengal and came to power in the state in alliance with Congress and the SUCI[75]. The state party remained bipolarized in nature with competitive multi-party system with TMC-led coalition government in power. The populist slogans, the pro-people image and the progressive leadership by Mamata Banerjee enabled TMC to come to power in the state[76]. Opposition used the weapon of moral politics for electoral gains, besides using populism blended with personality cult and dashed with a ray of hope and positivism to ensure pro-people good governance. However, her ability to retain the state mantle depends solely on her ability to ensure economic development of the state, establishment of order in the society. Translating the promises into actions will actually determine the party's chances of retaining the power in the state. However, the party during its first tenure was rocked by the multicrore Saradha scam and Rose Valley chit fund scam[77]. These scams had links with ruling Trinamool Congress. Saradha scam was a major financial scam caused by the collapse of the Ponzi scheme run by the Saradha group, a group running collective investment schemes. Many prominent political leaders were arrested in relation to the scam which involved Members of Parliament of Trinamool Congress, Kunal Ghosh and Srinjoy Bose,

[74] *See* www.aitcofficial.org (accessed on 19 March, 2016 at 01:30 pm).
[75] *"Trinamool Stakes claim to form government in West Bengal"*, The Hindu, May 16, 2011.
[76] The state lacked any viable alternative for long and this was one of the factosr that enabled Left Front to remain a popular choice of the electorates of Bengal. Trinamool Congress (TMC) eventually could emerge and present itself as a potential alternative in the state politics.
[77] *"Rose Valley scam much bigger than Saradha: Enforcement Directorate"*, The Economic Times, November 12, 2014.

former West Bengal Director General of Police Rajat Mazumder, football club official Debabrata Sarkar and Sports and Transport Minister of west Bengal, Madan Mitra. These political leaders received financial support from these groups which was accused of money laundering charges and of evading regulators such as SEBI[78]. These scams has seriously questioned the 'probity' of the TMC riding on which the party came to power dethroning the 34 year old CPI (M)-led Left rule in the state. The much flaunted honesty and integrity and pro-people image of the party has come into question and might seriously jeopardize the party's electoral fate with the upcoming assembly election. The recent sting video released by Narada News showing many of the state's ministers and other elected Trinamool members presently holding portfolios and contesting the upcoming election as Trinamool candidates is accepting bribe from a fictitious company had further wrecked the credibility of the pro-people, honest image of the Mamata Baneerjee-led Trinamool Congress party.[79] The ruling government of Mamata Banerjee had not been much successful in accelerating industrial growth in the state and neither has been able to attract investment in the industrial sector in the state despite of holding numerous industrial summits during her tenure[80]. The withdrawal of Tata from the Singur car plant had immensely affected the industrial fate of the state thereby discouraging other big business companies in investing and doing business in the state. The probable surge in the rate of employment in the state that would have occurred due to establishment of industrial houses was consequently hampered. However, the chief minister has taken several initiatives like improving infrastructure, putting an end to Maoist violence in the southern districts of Bengal when Kishenji, a Communist Party of India (Marxist) was gunned down by security forces in November 2011 during her era. This was followed by a series of arrests and surrender of other Maoist activists, establishing few colleges and universities, making recruitment of teachers in primary and secondary schools, colleges, unleashing new schemes like *kanyasree* which has curbed down early marriages and school dropouts of girl child in the state, *yuvasree* for youths, *Sabuj Sathi* (distribution of bicycles for girl students), rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg (extended the provision of National Food Security Act to the entire tribal

[78] *"Saradha scam turning out to be Tinamool Congress's worst nightmare"*, The Economic Times, September 15, 2014.
[79] *"Bribery sting: Narada can't wreck TMC's poll march"*, The Hindustan Times, March 15, 2016.
[80] *See* http://aitcofficial.org/aitc/bengal-global-business-summit-to-kick-off-tomorrow/ (accessed on August 16, 2016 at 11:45 am).

population of Jangalmahal), recruitment of special police constables from the Maoist belt of Jangalmahal, free shoes to primary school children, recreation facilities through numerous entertaining events etc. However, Mamata-led government has not been able to make any break through with relation to the land rehabilitation act, neither it has been able to give back the land that was taken away from the farmers of Nandigram and Singur. When incidence like anti-Nano agitation, rape and murder case of Tapasi Malik took Mamata Banerjee to new political heights then incidents like Park street rape case, Barasat rape and murder case during the reign of Mamata-led Trinamool Congress have jeopardized her credibility. In the first instance the response of the State Police and the ruling government was to play it down. This invited severe criticism for Mamata Banerjee who once portrayed herself as the apostle of honesty; a leader who stood for women's right and was accused of partiality by the ruling government to conceal the loopholes of the State administration.

The CPI (M) in order to oust the TMC from power had aligned with the Congress to fight the 2016 assembly polls to recover the lost bastion of the Left. Moreover, the Left to woo the hill population has extended their support to the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) that had previously parted ways with Left and had withdrawn their support from the Left for the 2011 assembly election which had actually led to substantial erosion of votes for the Left combine[81]. Mamata appealed for support for TMC by referring to her concern for the hill people and their welfare and her frequent visits to the hills during every calamity that the hill region had faced during her reign. The TMC-led government during its reign had established the Gorkhaland Territorial Board for the autonomous administration for the region in certain specific areas[82]. Many other boards such as the Boards of the Lepchas, Bhutias, Rai, Tamangs, etc. have been established by the ruling government for the development of these specific communities in the region. This has been considered as an attempt by the Mamata Banerjee-led government to marginalize the Gorkha monopoly in the hills. Moreover, the split in GJMM which led to the birth of Jan Andolan Party (JAP) of Harka Bahadur Chettri has led to the decrease in the strength of GJMM. JAP has extended

[81] North Bengal has primarily voted in support of Left Front. *See* Ranajit Das Gupta, *"1998 Elections in West Bengal: A Major Setback for Left Front"*, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 33, No. 19, May 9-15, 1998, p. 1113).
[82] *"Peace restored to Darjeeling hills"*, The Hindu, March 16, 2012.

support to TMC for the 2016 assembly polls. TMC has suffered a drubbing in the recent Siliguri Municipal election where the Left has surpassed the ruling Trinamool Congress. The issue of corruption has been the major plank of the campaign of the Left and Congress riding on which the alliance sought to dethrone the so vouched *Ma, Mati, Manush* government of Mamata Banerjee. The contest largely revolved around the Left-Congress secular combine and the AITC along with attempts by the BJP-led NDA to make large-scale inroads in the state's electoral map. However, with the 2016 assembly polls TMC resurged victorious with 211 seats in the House of 294. BJP could secure 3 seats and the Left-Congress alliance could garner 76 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Due to some serious drawbacks of the TMC-led government it was expected the Left-Congress alliance might benefit in the 2016 assembly election. The Left failed to cast its spell because it had no young leaders to project, the organizational workers are less zealous due to the decreasing popularity of the Left in the state. Moreover, it had no impressive welfare agenda or prospective plan of action and its campaign revolved primarily around the issue of anti-corruption with a one point agenda of removing TMC government from power. Its pre-poll alliance with Congress further sealed its fate. The popularity of Congress among the electorates has faded away. Hence, the combine failed to attract the votes of the common people. On the contrary, TMC was still able to sell hope for a better future with its development oriented rhetoric. Mamata Bannerjee's personal standing among the people fetched enormous share of votes for TMC. Mamata Baneerjee while in power pursued development oriented activities. She adhered to welfare economics to sustain her popularity and retain the rein of control. She could maintain the communal harmony of the state, extended funds to maintain burial grounds of the Muslims, provided scholarships to meritorious minority students and gave tickets to minority leaders like Abdur Razzak Mollah and Siddiqullah Choudhury to attract minority votes. In 2016 assembly polls TMC had an edge over in most of the districts like Nadia, North and South 24 Paraganas, Kolkatta, Howrah, Hooghly, East Midnapore, West Midnapore, Purulia, Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum, South Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri[83]. Hence, the state party system has been able to retain its stability with the people of the state giving some more tenure to the Trinamool Congress to translate rhetoric into palpable actions. The state party system has with the 2016 assembly election has

[83] *"Mamata's political capitals on a high"*, The Hindu, May 20, 2016.

remained bipolarized and competitive multi-party in nature with pre-dominance of Trinamool Congress. The Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government will have to ensure peace and communal harmony, industrial development, economic development and create avenues for new jobs to sustain itself in power.

The Features of West Bengal State Party System

The party system of West Bengal has always been a competitive multi-party system in nature as numerous political parties have co-existed and competed for power in the state. Till 1967 it had been a multiparty system with Congress as the pre-dominant party. Since 1967 an era of coalition politics had set in and had acquired a permanent feature of the state party system. This was replaced by the emergence of Trinamool as the pre-dominant party[84] in a competitive multi-party system. The parties that constituted the party system were marked by frictions and this led to birth of many other parties and hence made the party system homogeneous in nature. The practice of defection by political leaders due to friction and dissensions made the party system more volatile in nature. The party system was not significantly influenced by 'identity' based aspects due to the long spell of presence of the Leftist rule which does not subscribe much to the politics based on "identity" factors and hence the party system was largely determined by the ability on the part of the government in power to 'deliver' and ensure 'good governance' to its people. The dominance of the educated middle class in the political system has also disabled the politics based on "identity" makers leave much imprints in the political system in Bengal. The role of opposition has always remained noteworthy and has always effected reconfiguration and realignments in the party system.

Maharashtra

The State of Maharashtra is situated in the western part of the Indian Union. The state has been a bastion of the Congress Party. The state has survived all the tumultuous years between 1967 and 1972. In 1989 as well Maharashtra did not give verdict

[84] Trinamool emerged as the majority party with the 2011 assembly election but it retained its pre-poll allies as a mark of courtesy and humility.

against the Congress Party. Maharashtra emerged as one of the most stable state regime of the Congress party. Maharashtra always played a pivotal role in the nationalist movement. Many eminent Maharashtrians leaders provided leadership to the Congress in the early years. Maharashtra was largely influenced by the impact of western education. Hence, a new class emerged comprising of the western educated elite and they enjoyed greater access to education, civil services, employment, politics, etc. This new class led the national movement for independence. This elite class was composed mostly of the Brahmans and non-Maharashtrians that retained a superior and leading position in all the spheres. This created resentment among the non-Brahman section of the Maharashtrian society who remained deprived of all such basic facilities. Hence, a revolt brewed and the non-Brahmans demanded for greater participation in the political system and enhanced access to basic facilities such as education, employment, etc. The numerically less Brahmans due to their access to western education became more eligible than their counterparts. The non-Brahmans demanded for a separate state, comprising of Marathi speaking areas, to end the domination of the elite Brahmans and the non-Maharashtrians for their greater representation, better access, enhanced economic, social, political opportunities. Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) emerged partly as the revolt against the Brahman and non-Maharashtrian's domination in the State Congress Organisation. Certain non-Brahman leaders deserted Congress and in 1948 formed their own party PWP. The first revolt to protest against the upper caste domination was initiated by Jyotiba Phule in 1873 in Maharashtra by founding the *Satya Shodak Samaj* which was a group which fought to liberate the Sudhras and the untouchables from the exploitation of the upper caste people. The central leadership remained reluctant and refused to comply with the demands for the creation of a new state of Maharashtra. Finally after independence when reorganization of states were initiated in 1956 Bombay Presidency was reorganized along the linguistic lines and the Marathi speaking areas of the Marathawada region from the erstwhile Hyderabad which remained neglected under the Nizams rule and the Vidarbha region which comprised of four districts of Berar and four districts of the Mahakoshal were merged into the Bombay Presidency. However, the spur did not subside when another revolt emerged that demanded for division of the erstwhile bilingual Bombay state into two separate state, namely, the state of Maharashtra and state of Gujarat. Simultaneously in 1956 the Mahagujarat

Movement was started that demanded for the creation of the state of Gujarat. In 1960, Maharashtra and Gujarat was created out of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency. Maharashtra Congress remained riddled with dichotomous attitude towards the demand for the proposed Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra. Many Congress leaders were in favour of the new state. Y.B Chavan[85] was one such leader who favoured creation of the new state but was careful enough in not to antagonize the central leadership and thus gained the appreciation of Nehru and other senior Congress leaders (Joshi, 1969, pp. 177-206). Finally, he was elected unanimously by the central leadership as the chief minister in 1956 when Morarji Desai joined the cabinet ministry in Delhi (www.maharashtracongress.org). The state of Maharashtra conducted its first poll in 1962. Hence with the 1962 assembly election Indian National Congress (INC) emerged victorious by winning 215 out of the 264 contested seats, polling 51.22 percent of votes and 51.22 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and Socialist (SOC) could secure nine and one seats respectively. Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), the state party, could bag 15 seats. In the 1967 assembly election as well INC could win 203 out of the 270 seats with 47.03 percent of votes and 47.03 percent of seats. PSP could bag 8 seats, CPI won 10 seats and BJS secured 4 seats. PWP, the state party, won 19 seats with INC emerging as the majority party in the assembly polls. In the 1972 state election INC again emerged victorious with 222 out of the 271 contested seats polling 56.36 percent of votes and 56.36 percent of seats. BJS won five seats and PWP won 7 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Till 1978 Congress enjoyed a smooth sail in the state party system in the absence of any potential alternative. Although Jana Sangh, PWP, SOC, Republican Party India (RPI) represented the opposition forces in the state party system but they could never create a substantial base for itself to emerge as the ruling alternative in the state party system. Hence till 1978 the state party system remained competitive multi-party in nature with predominance of Congress Party as the largest party.

However, since the ascendance of Indira Gandhi to power she made repeated attempts to concentrate power in her own hands and establish a unilateral control over the Congress organization and throttle state units. Hence, since 1970 Indira Gandhi has tried to erode the authority and the hegemony of the Maratha leadership. This has

[85] Y.B Chavan popularised the concept of *Bahujanwad* (majoritarianism) which made him gain popularity. The term epitomised the non-elite, oppressed and non-Brahmin castes.

created resentment among the state bosses and has led to fissures and fractures in the state unit of the Congress. Moreover, severe drought of 1970, the rigidity of the central leadership during the 1977 national emergency, factionalism within the State Congress unit, the defeat of Congress (I) in the 1977 Lok Sabha election eroded the credibility of the Congress Party in the state of Maharashtra (Palshikar & Birmal, 2004, p. 5472). By 1970s Congress was split into factions, namely, the Indira Congress, Maharashtra Socialist Congress, Vidarbha Congress and Congress (S) (EPW, Congress still supreme, 1979, p.930). Indira Gandhi has always tried to challenge the traditional Maratha lobby which has always dominated the course of state politics and even in 1975 she was successful in appointing S.B Chavan, a Maratha, as the chief minister of the state who has always maintained an estranged relationship with Y.B Chavan. The Maratha leadership fought the 1978 state election as a separate faction of the Congress Party as opposed to Indira Congress. Sharad Pawar too led a faction of Maratha leaders which formed the first non-Congress coalition government in the state (Palshikar & Birmal, 2004, p. 5472).

In the 1978 state election INC (I) won 62 out of the 203 seats with 18.34 percent of votes and 25.97 percent of seats and INC bagged 69 out of the 259 contested of seats, polling 25.33 percent of votes and 28.00 percent of seats. Janata Party (JNP) could fetch for itself 99 out of the 215 seats polling 27.99 percent of votes and 37.05 percent of seats. PWP could secure 13 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Although Janata Party emerged as the single largest party but Congress (I) with 62 seats and Congress (U) with 69 seats [86]formed a coalition and came together to form a coalition ministry under the leadership of Vasantdada Patil. Hence with the 1978 assembly election the state party system entered into a competitive multi-polarized multi-party system with coalition governments.

However, the Patil ministry had to step down when Sharad Pawar and his associates withdrew their support from the ministry. Pawar and his associates formed an alliance known as the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) with the non-Congress opposition parties and became the chief minister of the state in July 1978. He remained in power till February 1980. At the national level the Janata experiment collapsed and it could not emerge as a strong alternative to the Congress party. Hence, the political ascendancy of the Congress (I) was reinforced with the 1980 assembly election. Since

[86] See http://www.eci.nic.in

1980 till 1990 the state party system acquired a competitive, multi-polarized, multi-party system character and it witnessed a partial restoration of the Congress Party as the largest party. In the 1980 state election BJP won 14 out of the 45 contested seats. INC (I) won 186 out of the 286 seats with 44.50 percent of votes and 44.91 percent of seats. INC (U) won 47 out of the 192 contested seats with 20.49 percent of votes and 29.44 percent of seats. Janata Party and its splinter groups could not secure enough seats. JNP (JP) could only secure 17 seats. Janata Party Secular (Charan Singh) JNP (SC) and Janata Party-Secular (Raj Narain) JNP (SR) drew a blank. PWP bagged nine seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Antulay, a non-Maratha, was appointed as the chief minister of the state unanimously by the central leadership. Henceforth, the INC (I) remained in control of the state mantle and Indira Gandhi and later on Rajiv Gandhi scrupulously was able to maintain control over the Maratha politics and was efficiently able to suppress the hegemonic position of the Maratha lobby in the state politics. Internal factions, defection and conflict over political opportunities were some of the significant factors that had gradually weakened the strength of the omnipotent Maratha lobby in the state (Palshikar, 1994, p.273). In 1985 assembly election BJP occupied 16 seats. INC emerged as the largest party in the assembly by winning 161 out of the 287 contested seats, polling 43.41 percent of votes and 43.55 percent of seats. Indian Congress-Socialist (ICS) bagged 54 out of the 126 contested seats with 17.28 percent of votes and 38.86 percent of seats. JNP won 20 seats. PWP bagged 13 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). In the 1990 assembly polls BJP won 42 out of the 104 contested seats. INC again emerged victorious in the assembly election with 141 seats, polling 38.17 percent of votes and 39.81 percent of seats. Janata Dal (JD) could win 24 out of 214 contested seats with 12.72 percent of votes and 17.04 percent of seats. Shiv Sena (SHS/SS) could bag for itself 52 seats with 15.94 percent of votes and 24.99 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Even during the late eighties when a pronounced non-Congress coalition era emerged at the central level Maharashtra did not gave verdict against the Congress party. Janata Dal could not impose itself as a viable alternative among the Maratha populace.

In 1989 BJP formed an alliance in the state with Shiv Sena making the competitive multi-party state party system acutely bipolar in nature. Shiv Sena emerged as an important political force in the state of Maharashtra since 1980s and more particularly since 1990s. It participated in the city election of Mumbai and Thane from 1967

onwards. Between 1967 and 1972 Shiv Sena emerged as a prominent party both in Thane and Mumbai. It happens to be the longest ally of BJP. Before 1989 Lok Sabha polls, Shiv Sena had earlier entered into alliance with BJP for the 1984 Lok Sabha polls as well. Shiv Sena was formed in 1966 as a small outfit to preserve and promote the interests of the Marathi-speaking job seekers of Mumbai city. It pursued regional and communal identity to widen its base. It tried to spread its appeal with its son-of-soil policy and informal network of social service by its Sena activists (*karyakartas*) and populist rhetoric. During its nascent stage it resorted to violent movements and riots against the non-Maharashtrians and South Indian establishments accusing them of usurping the employment opportunities of the local Marathi youths. Sena had uprooted the trade union movement of Mumbai spearheaded mostly by the Left and the Socialists. It had resorted to unconventional fanatic semi-fascist tactics to implement its ideologies in the society. It has adopted aggressive stands over the Hindu-Muslim issue. In 1984 Sena had established the Hindu Mahasangh to protect the Hindu interests. Since 1980 it has mostly remained anti-Congress in nature although it had supported the Congress during emergency period and during the 1977-1978 election (Lele, 1995, pp. 1523-1524). Finally, Shiv Sena succeeded with the 1995 assembly polls by installing its own chief minister in alliance with BJP. Later on Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) which was formed in 1999 by Sharad Pawar as a party of the Marathas after deserting Congress over difference with Sonia Gandhi[87], the AICC president, added itself as another player in the state party system.

Ascendance of BJP-Shiv Sena Alliance

The 1995 election realigned the state party system by dislodging the Congress from the position of the ruling party. In the 1995 state election BJP occupied 65 out of the 116 contested seats with 12.80 percent of votes and 32.16 percent of seats. INC captured 80 out of the 286, polling 31.00 percent of votes and 31.23 percent of seats. Shiv Sena bagged 73 out of the 169 contested seats, polling 16.39 percent of votes and 27.69 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Shiv Sena and BJP formed an

[87] It was formed by rebel Congressmen such as P.A Sangma, Sharad Pawar, Tariq Anwar on May 1999 after being expelled from the Congress party for not readily accepting the stewardship of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and questioning the dynastic succession. They ridiculed the choice of Sonia Gandhi as the Congress President in 1998 after the stepping down of Sitaram Kesari for her foreign origin.

alliance along with the support of 10 Independents to oust the Congress party from power (Purandare, 2009, p. 20). The Sena-BJP alliance came to power in Maharashtra following the 1995 assembly election based on the anti-corruption plank[88]. The Congress was voted out of power in Maharashtra for the first time since independence in the state primarily because of the alleged involvement of the Sharad Pawar government in cases of corruption. Besides, charges like criminalization of politics, the stock market scam, the incidents of cases of serial bomb blast and the communal riot of 1992-93, the Enron issue, rising unemployment, the issue of immigration which seriously affected the interests of the natives, etc. grossly had a negative impact upon the electoral fortune of the Congress-NCP combine (Purandare, 2009, p.18). The electoral verdict was in favour of an 'alternative' to the Congress party. Manohar Joshi and later on Narayan Rane became the non-congress chief ministers of the state. The SS-BJP alliance could not perform inexplicably and failed to emerge as a very strong alternative in the state party system. Discord and disunity between chief minister Manohar Joshi and Thackeray was the primary reason for the collapse of the alliance government. Manohar Joshi was removed and Narayan Rane was installed as the new chief minister on February 1999 (Palshikar, 1999, p. 743). Corruption charges against the government wrested the chances of the coalition government to return to power. The SS-BJP combine failed to implement their proclamations. The slum rehabilitation scheme of housing one million slum dwellers by the end of 1999 did not achieve the complete mark and the government helplessly had to lower its target. The combine during its tenure could not generate employment opportunities for the native Maharashtrians and the promise to stabilize the prices of five essential food items such as rice, sugar, oil, jowar and lentils was never achieved, severe drinking water problems remained unresolved. The zunka bhakar scheme which aimed at providing food at a very nominal rate to the poor and the lower income group failed abysmally. Urbanisation gained importance and the interest of the rural poor remained unaddressed. The manufacturing sector grew at a rapid pace but the agricultural sector remained neglected (Purandare, 2009, pp. 18-19). The city of Mumbai (then Bombay) witnessed large-scale violence and communal riots between Hindus and Muslims during December 1992 and January 1993 in response to the 1992 Babri Masjid (Mosque) demolition and this was followed by the horrifying March 1993 Bombay

[88] *"Thackery allows Sutar's Sacrifice"*, The Hindustan Times, May 01, 1997.

blasts in which Yakub Menon became the prime convict[89]. The riot was largely designed to evoke the 'Hindu' identity by marginalizing and mutilating the minority community, the Muslims. It was alleged that Shiv Sena had resorted to play the communal card by instigating Hindu masses to consolidate its base and improve its electoral fate in the state. Following the submission of Srikrishna Commission[90] report three cadres of Shiv Sena were sentenced in connection to the Bombay (now Mumbai) riots[91].

Return of Congress-NCP alliance in the state

Since 1995 assembly election till the 2004 assembly election, the state party system exhibited a competitive multi-party acutely bipolarized character with coalition governments. In 1999 state election BJP won 56 out of the 117 contested seats with 14.54 percent of votes and 35.82 percent of seats. INC secured 75 out of the 249 contested seats, polling 27.20 percent of votes and 31.39 percent of seats. NCP bagged 58 out of the 223 contested seats with 22.66 percent of votes and 29.19 percent of seats. SHS won 69 out of the 161 contested seats polling 17.33 percent of votes and 31.16 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Vilasrao Deshmukh led-Congress government came back to power in the state in alliance with NCP, following the collapse of the SS-BJP alliance in the state due to the latter's misrule in the state. Vilasrao Deshmukh had the arduous task of providing good governance, accelerating power sector reforms, ensuring infrastructural development and its expansion, improving the financial condition of the state which was into doldrums following the poor management by the outgoing BJP-SHS coalition government. However, Deshmukh failed to live to the expectations and hence was asked to step down by the Congress High Command. The Congress High Command elected Sushil Kumar Shinde, a Dalit, as the leader of the Maharashtra Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on

[89] *"Implement Srikrishna Panel Report on 1992-93 riots: Samajwadi Party's Abu Azmi"*, The Economic Times, August 03, 2015.

[90] Justice B,N Srikrishna, a sitting judge of Bombay High Court was appointed to the head the Commission to probe into the circumstances that led to the riots of 1992-93 by the Sudhakar Rao Naik led Congress government in 1993. The report criticised the Naik-led Congress government for inefficient handling of the crisis situation. The Report by the Commission indicated that Shiv Sena played a role in inciting violence against the Muslims and theit properties which was flared up by inflammatory speeches and slogans by BJP workers in various rallies.

[91] "*Shiv Sena Politicians convicted over 1992 Mumbai riots"*, July 09, 2008, www.in.reuters.com (accessed at 12:05 pm on 29 April, 2016).

January 2003. NCP too supported his candidature as Sharad Pawar preferred Shinde over Vilasrao Deshmukh. Chhagan Bhujbal, a NCP leader continued as the Deputy Chief Minister of the state. Shinde was installed as the new chief minister of the multi-party Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) government along with Independents and small parties like Janata Dal (Secular), RPI (Gavai), Gondwana Ganatantra Party, etc[92]. The replacement of chief ministers was a gesture of the Congress party to project itself as a party which wishes to perform and deliver progressive good governance to its masses.

In 2004 assembly polls INC won 69 out of the 157 contested seats, polling 21.06 percent of votes and 39.39 percent of seats. NCP secured 71 out of the 124 contested seats with 18.75 percent of votes and 42.72 percent of seats. BJP won 54 out of the 111 contested seats polling 13.67 percent of votes and 36.53 percent of seats. SHS bagged 62 out of the 163 contested seats, polling 19.97 percent of votes and 34.93 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress-NCP alliance came back to form the Democratic Progressive Front government in the state. Vilasrao Deshmukh, a Maratha from the backward Marathawada region was reinstated as the chief minister of the state[93]. However, he could not complete his tenure and had to tender resignation owning the moral responsibility for the Mumbai terror strikes. He invited severe criticism after he visited the Taj Hotel, which was one of the targets of the terrorists, with a popular film maker along with his actor son which weakened his political stature in the state as well as in the country and questioned his sensitivity towards such a grave issue as a state leader. The state administration had failed to prevent the horrifying 26/11 terror attack which took thousands of innocent lives and brought the vibrant life of the state to a standstill. He was succeeded by Ashok Chavan, the industry minister, in the outgoing Deshmukh-led coalition government[94].

With the 2009 assembly election the state party system became competitive multi-party multi-polarized in nature with coalition governments. With the 2009 assembly election the BJP won 46 out of the 114 contested seats with 14.02 percent of votes and 33.56 percent of seats. INC won 62 out of the 170 contested seats polling 21.01 percent of votes and 36.51 percent of seats. NCP won 62 out of the 113 contested

[92] *"Shinde to be Maharashtra CM",* The Hindu, January 17, 2003.
[93] *"No lobbying to elect me: Deshmukh"*, The Hindu, October 29, 2004.
[94] *"Ashok Chavan to be chief minister"*, The Hindu, December 06, 2008.

seats with 16.37 percent of votes and 40.27 percent of seats. SHS secured 44 out of the 160 contested seats, polling 16.26 percent of votes and 29.90 percent of seats. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), a political novice in the state bagged 13 out of the 143 contested seats and LSP drew a blank (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress and NCP emerged as the largest party and staked their claim to form the government in the state along with support from Independents and other small parties like Bharip Bahujan Mahasangh, Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, Swabhimani Paksha. MNS emerged as was the spoiler for the Shiv Sena[95]. With the support of the small parties and Independents Congress-NCP acquired the majority in the assembly and formed the coalition government with Ashok Chavan as the chief minister for second time in a row[96]. He was not able to continue as the chief minister of the state as well and was succeeded by Mr. Prithviraj Chavan. The Adarsh Society scam rattled the Chavan ministry and was the immediate cause of his resignation. Charges of corruption and nepotism grossly distorted the credentials of Prithviraj Chavan. It highlighted an infamous nexus between politicians, bureaucrats, builders[97]. Defense Minister A.K Antony told the Parliament that Asok Chavan was one of the 13 people named by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Adarsh Housing Society Scam. Chavan was also accused of nepotism when he assigned flats in the Adarsh

[95] MNS was the result of the family feud over the issue of succession. Raj Thackeray, nephew of Bal Thackeray wanted to be anointed as his successor. However, Bal Thackeray appointed his own son Udhav Thackeray as his successor. Hence Raj Thackeray revolted and deserted Shiv Sena and floated his own political outfit Maharashtra Navnirman Sena on March 2006. It is ethnocentric in ideology as well and projects itself as an all inclusive party to widen its support base. He took up the cause and need of the new Maharashtrian middle-class who demanded a party embedded in Maharashtrian ethos and interests. It harps on the ideology of Marathi sub-nationalism. He took up the cause of unemployment.

[96] *"Congress, NCP retain power in Maharashtra"*, The Hindu, October 23, 2009.

[97] The Adarsh Housing Society is a cooperative society in the city of Mumbai in India. It was reserved for the war widows and veterans of the Kargil War. In 2010, the Indian media brought to public the violations of rules at various phases of construction in the Adarsh Society. Questions were raised on the manner in which apartments in the building were allocated to bureaucrats, politicians and army personnel who had nothing to do with Kargil War and the way in which clearances were obtained for the construction of the building of the Adarsh Society. The Adarsh society high-rise was constructed in the posh Colaba locality of Mumbai, which is considered a sensitive coastal area by the Indian Defence forces and houses various Indian Defence establishments. The society is also alleged to have violated the Indian environment ministry rules. Many activists like Medha Patkar had been trying to uncover this scam since a long time. Several inquiries have been ordered by the army and the Government to probe into the irregularities. Some of the current occupants of the flats in the Adarsh co-operative society building have offered to vacate their flats at the earliest, denying allegations that they were allotted flats because they influenced or helped, in some manner, the construction of the society by violating the rules. The environment minister Jairam Ramesh formally set the ball rolling for the demolition of the entire 31-storey scam-tainted Adarsh building in Coloba's eco-sensitive zone on Friday November 12, 2010. It was being reported that the environment minister had sent a show cause notice to the Adarsh housing society for violating the green norms.

Society to some of his close relatives whereas the society was actually meant for the war widows. President's rule was imposed in the state after the NCP, the biggest ally of the Congress party in the Democratic Front coalition government withdrew its support from the government and reduced it to a minority government on September 26, 2014[98].

In 2014 assembly election BJP emerged victorious by winning 122 out of the 260 contested seats, polling 27.81 percent of votes and 31.15 percent of seats. INC won 42 out of the 287 contested seats with 17.95 percent of votes and 18.10 percent of seats. NCP bagged 41 out of the 278 contested seats polling 17.24 percent of votes and 17.96 percent of seats. MNS could bag a single seat for itself. SHS won 63 out of the 282 contested seats with 19.35 percent of votes and 19.80 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The parties like Congress, Shiv Sena, BJP and NCP fought the elections on their own and did not enter into any pre-poll alliance. The pro-Modi wave and series of corruption scam which had rocked the Congress-led UPA II contributed positively towards the victory of the BJP in the state election in the state of Maharashtra. BJP contested the election alone breaking the 25 year old alliance with Shiv Sena. Riding on the slogan "Narendra in Delhi and Devendra in Maharashtra", Devendra Fadnavis, a Brahmin, became the present chief minister of the state[99]. Thus with the 2014 state election BJP emerged as the largest party in the competitive multi-party, multi-polarized state party system.

The features of the Maharashtra State Party System

Community prowess has since the inception of the state shaped the state party system. The Maratha lobby has dominated the course of evolution of the state party system. The state party system is marked by multiplicity of parties. Dissensions have led to factionalism which has led to the growth of many small parties that time and again has led to reconfiguration of the state party system. Political opportunities, favouritism, family patronage, nepotism, corruption has always been the deciding factor that led to realignment in the party system. Presently, urge for development is what best shapes the party system.

[98] *"President's rule in Maharashtra"*, The Hindu, September 29, 2014.
[99] *"It's Fadnavis in Maharashtra"*, The Hindu, October 29, 2014.

Conclusion

Hence it is discernible that each state with its own set of people, culture, language, caste compositions, issues, problems, grievances and aspirations voted in varied pattern only produce multiple state party systems. A single country possesses a bifurcated party system into national and state level. The contest between upper caste and lower caste to acquire the rein of political power initiated the process of bifurcation of the Indian party system into two levels. It deepened with the process of defection and factionalism. Conflict over political opportunities, the lust to acquire and retain power led to splits in parties. Hence emergence of new parties and multiplicity of political parties led to increased availability of choices at the disposal of the voters. This led to scattered electoral verdict and thus fragmentation of the Indian Party System and rise in multiple state party system. Asymmetry between rhetoric, intent and implementation of poll promises, agenda of actions and vision plans, an intense urge for a better tomorrow, good governance and positive development in tune with social justice and equity are some of the factors that guide the voting pattern of the population. Hence, these parameters are also largely responsible for the bifurcation of the Indian Party Systems. The initial years since Independence many states opted to vote in a diversified pattern because the ruling Congress government was not able to provide abundant return to the masses. Hence, the above mentioned factors guided their electoral logic to give verdict against non-Congress Alternatives thereby producing multiple state party systems. The perfect blending of promises and performance will determine the future course of the Indian Party System at both the national and state levels.

Chapter VI

General Elections (2004-2014) and the Indian Party System: Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism

The chapter tries to sketch the revival of the Congress Party along with discussing the various corrective measures that it had adopted to revive itself from the state of decline. The chapter also includes the manifesto of the 2004 and 2009 election of the Congress party that had played a significant role for the party to create a "pro-people" image for the party. The chapter has also focused on the electoral performance of the party in the 14th and the 15th Lok Sabha and the state assembly elections simultaneously tracing out some of the probable reasons for its resurgence. Through the chapter attempts has been made to see the immediate reasons for the electoral debacle of Congress-led UPA government and see how parameters like populism, personality (popularity), performance and ability to raise hope of the electorates by a political party for a better tomorrow (positivity) has determined the outcome of the General Election of 2014. Besides, it deals with the most important strategies adopted by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to come to power with the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The chapter deals with General Election 2014 and the performance of the different political parties in the 16th Lok Sabha polls. It also tries to study the impact of the outcome of the election on the nature of the party system.

The Indian party system and subsequently Indian politics has not only witnessed sea changes and reconfiguration but produces surprising results as well. James Manor, in his article, '*Parties and the Party System'*, 2002, has identified various factors such as defection, increase in mass consciousness, people's urge for development and the performance of a ruling government on the Indian party system and the subsequent changes in it due to these factors. Prakash Sarangi (2002) in his article entitled "*Economic Reforms and Changes in the Party System*" highlights the fact that socio-economic development and the economic reforms that have been undertaken has a direct bearing on the nature of the party system and the voting pattern of the electorate. The changes that has occurred in the role and attitude of the Indian National Congress and the transformation that the Indian National Congress has

undergone has introduced significant changes in the nature of the party system in the country. Its demise from the uninterrupted hegemonic position has brought significant changes in the nature of the party system at both the national and state level. Besides, undying pangs of hunger for development or growth has been a determining factor that has led to transitional shifts and transformation of the Indian party system. Since election is a very significant component of a democratic political structure therefore with the aid of these electoral results an attempt has been made to show the reconfigurations that has taken place in the party system.

Political Parties exercises the function of interest aggregation and articulation. People of underdeveloped or developing countries prefer to move ahead or rather aspire for progress in their standard of living. Hence parties that deliver and perform, keep a balance between proclamations and actions when in power finds support among the common masses. It is then when performance of the ruling government becomes the sole factor.

The Indian Party System Manifests *Aspirations* of the Electorates

The underdeveloped and developing societies were burdened with a long history of feudal, foreign, bureaucratic and authoritarian rule. India too witnessed a similar phenomenon when the Indian National Congress which emerged as pressure group to oppose the British rule in India gradually got transformed into a mass movement to lead the nationalist movement in the country. It eventually got transformed into a mass political party and subsequently enjoyed undisputable hegemony for a considerable time since independence. Parties that were formed in hurry or out of political exigencies or as a result of factionalism were often unable to sustain themselves in the long run. Janata Party and Janata Dal are two such most suitable examples. In recent times the electoral logic of the Indian electorate irrespective of any class, caste, community and language has been mostly guided by their judgment on the records of parity between 'as promised' and 'as delivered'. The present electoral logic defies the claim of Lipset and Rokkan (1967)[1] that cleavages and

[1] Party system will reflect principal cleavages and conflicts in the society. According to, Lipset and Rokkan cleavage manifest in several forms along the socio-economic, religious, ethnicity and urban–rural parameters. *See* Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *"Cleavage, Structure, Party Systems*

conflicts influence the trajectory of the party system of a nation. On the contrary, besides cleavages and conflicts, *"aspirations"* (for growth, development, social justice and equity) of the populace translates into the party system and determines the trajectory of the party system at both the levels. The Indian population desires to rise above and shed the status of being citizen of an underdeveloped or developing country. It wishes to tread the path of development or growth along with equity through various social welfare schemes. Thus, Indian politics and the Indian party system at both the levels in my opinion are in the present era driven by four **P**s *Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism.* The general election of 1971, 2004, 2009 and 2015, the 2016 state assembly elections of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar amply testifies the fact.

This trend consolidated more particularly since 2004 general election[2] when BJP's pro-rich policies, the issue of rising unemployment and the catastrophic impact of its fanatic Hindutva campaign prepared its graveyard for burial. Hence, BJP-led NDA was ousted from power with the 2004 Lok Sabha election.

The 2004 Lok Sabha Election

With the 14th Lok Sabha election, Congress was back at the centre leading a coalition under the banner of United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) failed to emerge victorious, although it was presumed that it would enjoy a comfortable re-election. There was a dramatic shift in the mandate of the people of India. The Congress was able to shed off its complacent attitude towards coalition politics and by its dedicated endeavour it was able to come back to power at the centre in 2004.

The pro-rich policies, growing unemployment, frequent communal infightings, the fanatic campaign of the ideals of Hindutva and its forceful implementation are some of the gross reasons for the rejection of the BJP-led government in the 2004 election (Hasan, 2007, p.71). It is the performance of the government which determines its ability to come back to power. This has been the guiding factor for determining the

and Voter Alignments: An Introduction" in "Party System and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives", Free Press, New York, 1967.

[2] Earlier the *"garibi hatao"* (remove poverty) slogan and her various adopted socialist policies of Indira Gandhi did wonder for the dwindling Congress party in 1971 lok sabha election.

mandate of the people in India since 1967. The case was similar even for the 2004 election. However, Congress then was already in a state of decline for well over a decade. In the 1999 election, the Congress registered its lowest ever number of seats in the Lok Sabha with 114 MPs (Bhambri, 2007, p.200). BJP emerged as the single largest party though was not able to secure an absolute majority. By 1999 the Indian party system has entered into a predominantly bipolar system with Congress and the BJP as main contenders for power, more particularly at the Centre. Meanwhile, the Congress was already in a state of perplex. It found itself alienated from the Muslims, dalits, advasis and the backward castes. In fact the Congress suffered electoral reverses in many parts of the country like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. In these states, caste-based parties and non-Congress alternatives had made inroads. Bharatiya Lok Dal, Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Janata Dal (United) in Bihar to name some of them. The debacle of the Congress subsequently led to the fragmentation of the party system whereby the smaller parties seemed to have bigger roles to play in the Indian political system. Regional appeals, deprivations, appeals in the name of caste, class and identities were appearing to dominate politics since the late 1960s and more pronouncedly from late 1980s. In fact, the national parties were allying with these regional or caste-based parties. They were gradually becoming powerful and strong and were coming to hold power in their respective states too.

There was rise of the BJP and regional as well as caste based anti-Congress parties. Hence emergence of regional parties and the rise of a non-Congress alternative, viz., the BJP have actually led to the absolute downfall of the “Congress System”. Since 1996 there was an emergence of a binodal system, largely polarized between the Congress and the BJP and marked by a region based multiparty system. During this period the Congress suffered a significant decline in political support. Congress was striving hard for survival. The Congress during the Rao-led tenure was seeping more into the state of decline and was attacked with charges of corruption and for its inability to prevent Babri Masjid demolition.

Sitaram Kesari failed to display the necessary political acumen required to revive the Congress Party from its state of decline. Sitaram Kesari failed to emerge as an efficient Congress President. A vacuum was created in the leadership position. After repeated pleas and persuasion Sonia Gandhi took up the reign of control of the party

in her hands. Sitaram Kesari was not willing to relinquish his post. Pressure mounted from all quarters and the Congress Working Committee by exercising special power removed him from the office of the President of the Party on 14th March, 1998 and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi succeeded him (Jai & Jai, 1999, p.24). Hence, Sonia Gandhi succeeded to the post of Congress President and had formidable task to accomplish so as to revive the Congress Party from the state of decline. She had to restore back the traditional social constituencies, win back elections in States like UP, Bihar where Congress has been marginalized, project and make herself acceptable as the leader for the Congress party. Hence she pledged to take up some drastic useful steps to bring back the electoral credibility of the Congress Party.

Strategies for Rejuvenation: Popularity

Within few months after Sonia Gandhi assumed the position of the Congress President in September 1998, she convened a meeting of the Congress Party in Pachmari to formulate some of the probable strategies for the rejuvenation of the Congress party. In the brainstorming session at Pachmari, Sonia Gandhi while addressing the session declared that the Congress Party will remain committed to its pledge to provide stability to the nation. She even accepted that Congress was in a state of decline. Congress would accept the coalitional form of government but also expressed her faith and determination to bring back the Congress with full force at the Centre in the long run.[3]

During the Pachmari session efforts were also made to identify the major weaknesses which dwelled in the Congress organization and it was asserted that there was a need to restructure it to facilitate revival of the Congress Party from its state of decline. Through the Pachmari session, Congress resolved to fight the communal forces in the country and remain whole heartedly committed to the secular ideals which forms the bedrock of our society. Congress also felt the need to successfully accommodate the aspirations of the dalits, adivasis (Tribals) and the backward people, particularly in the northern part of the country to revive itself in the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and devise effective strategies to marginalize parties like Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, and Rashtriya Janata Dal. Congress even decided to take adequate

[3] Earlier the Congress party had reservations about accepting the coalitional form of politics.

measures to ensure full representation to these sections of the society and provide policies and programmes to ameliorate the position of these sections in the society.

Besides, adopting these resolutions the party took up several other strategies to rejuvenate its image.

1) The erosion of base among the poor was one of the prime reasons for its debacle. Hence the party in its manifesto decided to incorporate special packages for the minorities, for people below the poverty line and for the small farmers The Congress Party even in its manifesto decided to accommodate intensive populist programmes for the poor and the marginalized.

2) Besides, the strategies also involved the "politics of apology" for the Operation Bluestar,[4] the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and apology for not being able to prevent the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992.

3) Moreover, in order to express its repentance for the anti-Sikh riot in 1984 it denied tickets to H. K. L. Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar from Delhi.

4) To woo the sentiments of the Muslim voters the Congress party denied ticket to the veteran leader and former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. He was castigated for not being able to adopt stern measures and prevent the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992. During this period Congress was at power in the Centre.

5) To instil the essence of 'positivity' and 'popularity' the party devised policies and made efforts to bring in new and young faces within its fold so as to create a hope in the party and also to create a base among the young generation (Roy, 1999, p.49-50).

In the Pachmari session, the Congress Party expressed its intention to expand the ideological framework of the party to include 'stability' as its bedrock, besides reposing its faith on secularism, socialism, socio-economic justice and economic self-reliance. The Congress vociferously attacked all the unstable non-Congress governments. Further, to consolidate the position of the Congress Party, Sonia Gandhi

[4] It was put into operation during the Indira Gandhi era when the Indian Amy stormed inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar to fight some separatists and also took into possession a pile of arms and ammunition. It is being said that it had hurt the religious sentiments of the Sikhs.

even decided to make changes in the organization of the party at various levels at an AICC session on 18th December, 1998. Even at the Pachmari Session decision was taken to revive and revitalize the party organization. Sonia Gandhi even appointed P. A. Sangma as head of a high level party task force to suggest ways and means to revitalize the organization at various levels.

Despite of its numerous efforts to revive the organization and to bring ideological clarity Congress did not achieve much success. The hectic campaign by Sonia Gandhi to win back the lost grounds also did not bring much dividend for the party. On the contrary, it was seen that the Congress lost the 1999 general election to the then rising BJP. It in fact, won the lowest number of seats (114 MPs only). Hence, the electoral fate of the Congress Party suffered severe reverses. Congress could retain power in states like Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra following the assembly elections in 1999. Thus, the immediate need was to restore the lost credibility and popularity of the party. The most important parameter upon which the future of the party in fact depended upon was restoring the esprit de corps among the organizational workers. The need was to instil a feeling of involvement and attachment among the workers at the grassroots level. The A. K. Anthony Committee Report, 2000 suggested to go for sufficient amount of federalization and introduce inner party democracy so as to make the state and central leadership and decisions acceptable among the grassroots workers.

However, all these strategies and campaigns did not yield any benefit for the party which became more evident with its defeat in Gujarat 2002 Assembly election and 2003 Madhya Pradesh State election. Hence, the Congress Party realized that there was a need for some radical political and strategic approach.

The More Radical Strategies for Rejuvenation: Positivity and Populism

The Congress Party in order to adopt some more radical and effective measures organized a 'Vichar Manthan Shivir' at Shimla on 7th, 8th and 9th July, 2003 and adopted the "Shimla Sankalp"(Shimla Resolution) which was a fourteen point political charter in order to resurrect its position. The foremost strategy the Congress Party adopted was to vociferously attack the ideology of cultural nationalism of BJP

and expose the myth that BJP was spreading with regard to its proclaimed economic reforms as well as reveal to the people how through its communal campaign BJP was trying to destroy the secular fabric of India. To accomplish it the Congress party decided through the Shimla Sankalp to launch a 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' (People's Awareness Campaign) to expose the failures of the BJP led government.[5]

The Congress reemphasized its determination and commitment to fight all kinds of religious fundamentalism and protect the secular fabric of India from the onslaughts of the BJP, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal. It pledged to protect all the great religion and faiths of the country.

With the adoption of the Shimla Sankalp the Congress rededicated itself to strengthen the forces of nationalism and strive hard towards preventing the communalization of education (which was being initiated by the BJP led government). Following the *shivir* (session) at Shimla, the first and foremost task that was adopted to successfully accomplish the mammoth task of coming back to power was to give voice, respect and position to the party cadres across the country and use their committed service to ensure the victory for the Congress party. Through the 'Sankalp' (Resolution) the Congress resolved to devise effective strategy to deal with cross border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir region and deal with heavy hand with the various insurgent groups that are into operation in the North-Eastern part of the country. It accused and expressed its determination to expose the dangerous and nefarious political game that the BJP-led NDA government was playing with these groups in these regions.

The Sankalp laid greater emphasis on social and economic issues in keeping with beacon "Congress Ka Haath, Garib Ke Saath"(Congress is with the Poor). Hence, it assured:

i) To enact national and rural employment guarantee by law;

ii) To launch major programmes for the economic advancement, social empowerment, political representation and legal equality of dalits, adivasis, OBCs and minorities.

[5] The 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' was launched to make the people aware about the weaknesses of the BJP-led NDA government and its inadequacies. To the Congress the BJP- led coalitional government was not able to achieve what it had promised.

iii) Ensure food and nutrition security for all, most particularly for the destitute and vulnerable sections of the society and for the poor and backward regions of the country;

iv) Introduce social insurance and other schemes for the welfare of all workers, mostly for the workers at the unorganized sector;

v) To devolve funds, functions and functionaries to empower panchayats, and nagarpalikas;

vi) To sincerely implement land reform measures and initiate reform in land laws and records of rights;

vii) Reliable power, cheaper credit, better seeds, assured irrigation and remunerative prices to 'kisans' across the country;

viii) Time-bound implementation of Mahila Sashaktikaran Sankalp;

ix) To take initiative to ensure representation of the social diversity in the private sector through reservation and fiscal incentives and by promoting entrepreneurship among dalits and adivasis.

x) To ensure maximum political, social and economic support to realize their aspirations in education, employment and entrepreneurship.

xi) Introduce liberal loans and scholarship schemes for weaker sections of the society.

xii) To deeper fiscal and other economic reforms to make Indian agriculture, industry and services productive and competitive and increase public investment in irrigation, power, education and health.

xiii) To introduce administrative, police and judicial reforms to make administration transparent, responsive and accountable (AICC, 2003).

The Sankalp also enlisted its resolve to establish a National Training Institute so that every Congress men and women can go through an annual orientation course on contemporary social, political and economic issues and constructive works. With the adoption of the Shimla Sankalp Congress expressed its decision to shed off its reservation on the issue of political alliances under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi (AICC, 2003). By adopting the Shimla Sankalp under the stewardship of Sonia

Gandhi, Congress displayed its determination to come back to the centre stage by plugging off its loopholes.[6]

The 'Popular' Initiatives of the Congress Party to Revive itself

Meanwhile, since 1999 by dislodging the Rao-led Congress (I) government the BJP-led NDA government was able to pull on for a little over four years in power. It was then Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of NDA government announced the holding of a fresh election much before the expiry of the term of his government. The victory in Gujarat 2002 Assembly election, even after the infamous Godhra carnage, instilled gallon of confidence among several partners in the ruling coalition which led to the announcement of the early polls. The BJP-led NDA was certain about its return to power.[7]

On the eve of the 2004 election the endeavour on the part of the Indian National Congress to portray itself as the party of the 'aam admi' was a indication that Congress was head bound to restore itself back to power. The Shimla Sankalp and the campaign for the 2004 Lok Sabha election manifested the real transformation of the political approach of the Congress Party. As discernible, Sonia Gandhi made every effort to revive the Congress Party from its state of decline. The strategy of 'aam admi' or its pro-poor policies was posited against the pro-rich policies of the NDA and the insensitive, irrelevant 'India Shining' campaign of the NDA.

To ensure that the Congress can increase its popularity among the masses, Sonia Gandhi campaigned vigorously to spread the messages of the party across the length and breadth of the country. This was one of the most striking features of the 2004 election campaign. She had emerged had campaigned hard for the election accompanied by her son, Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Gandhi. She had covered almost the whole country. She had toured in some prime states such as Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Haryana, Chattishgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

Through her Jan Sampark (mass contact) programme she had propagated the aims, principles and programmes of the Congress party, reached out to the people,

[6] Initially Mrs. Sonia Gandhi too was reluctant about joining politics but ultimately she accepted the position of the party President.

[7] It is often being held that pressure was mounted on Vajpayee to prepone the 2004 election although he was of not the similar opinion. The BJP combine was self assured of its victory in the polls.

established contacts, heard their grievances and problems.[8] It was this grassroots contact which enabled her to emerge as the leader of the people and enhance her popularity. Sonia Gandhi's mass contact programme reaped dual benefit for the Congress Party. It enabled her and the party to establish contact with the people and give Congress an image of people's party. On the other, it enthused the Congress workers and revived the espirit de corps among its cadres. This dynamic initiative in the name of "Jan Sampark Programme" had generated large scale support for the party. Her visit into some prime constituencies which involved wading into crowds had actually led to restore and reaffirm faith of the common people and had enabled themselves to identity with the party. She was in fact able to circulate the message clearly that the Congress is committed towards continuing the economic reforms instilled with a strong component of social welfare and justice and programmes to alleviate poverty (Sharma, 2004, pp.10-12).

It was the three pronged approach of the Congress to rejuvenate itself actually paid dividends for the party which included reaffirming its commitment towards secularism, pluralism and composite nationhood and by enhancing the essence of democracy by ensuring well being for all the sections of society (Hasan, 2007, p.92).

The 'Populist' 2004 Lok Sabha Election Manifesto

The 2004 manifesto was laced with numerous populist programmes which were primarily designed to ensure enhanced public services for the poor, the marginalized, downtrodden, the deprived, the tribals, dalits, the adivasis and the disadvantaged. The manifesto included provisions that would produce a government of the "aam admi" (common man). Thus the context of the 2004 Election manifesto was different from the 1999 manifesto of Congress where the prime focus was providing the nation with a stable and able government which will sustain secularism and maintain social harmony. The thrust of the 2004 election manifesto was different from that of the liberalization agenda initiated by the Congress in the early 1990s. The shift reflected the conscious decision of the leadership of the Congress Party to restore their lost support bases and revive themselves as the ruling party at the centre. With the 2004

[8] Through it efforts was also made to establish contacts and communication with the women section of the population. They would unfold their grievances to their leader.

Lok Sabha election, Congress appeared more determined to defeat the BJP-led NDA combine. Hence, in the manifesto for the 2004 Lok Sabha election the Congress was seen to be very critical about the performance of the 1999-2004 BJP-led NDA coalitional government. To Congress, the NDA government had massively increased unemployment by its economic policies as well as destabilized and lowered growth rates. Besides, the national security came repeatedly under threats during its tenure. The Congress Party in its manifesto even condemned it for inciting and sponsoring communal infightings and thereby hampering the social harmony of the nation. To authenticate their standpoint Congress even referred to the Godhra massacre in Gujarat in its manifesto and rhetoric, blamed the government for instigating violence against the missionaries and exposed communal organizations like Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad for unleashing violence against the minorities. The most blatant blow to the credibility of the NDA government came with the Kandahar hijack case when three terrorists were released who were in fact escorted by the then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. The Congress Party also referred to the Babri Masjid demolition issue that further tarnished the image of the NDA government. Later on the attack on the Parliament in December 13, 2001 further jeopardized its credibility. During its tenure the number of suicides by the farmers across the country had increased, alleged the Congress party in its manifesto along with growing destitutions of the 'khet mazdoors'. Hence to arrest all these loopholes of the then ruling government the Congress came forward with some solemn resolutions as contained in its 2004 manifesto known as the 'Six Basics' for governance. Thus the 'six basics' were:

i) To ensure social cohesion and harmony by taking stringent measures against those who promote hatred and bigotry;

ii) To increase income of the middle class;

iii) To provide equality in terms of opportunities in all the spheres of life for the dalits, Other Backward Classes and for the religious and linguistic minorities;

iv) To secure productive and secure employment opportunities;

v) To empower women politically, economically, legally, socially and educationally; and

vi) To ensure improve in the income and condition of the Kisan's and Khet Mazdoors (AICC, 2004, p.16).

The 2004 election manifesto incorporated some other populist promises as well. The Indian National Congress expressed its intention to alleviate poverty and create new jobs and thus the party promised to enact a national employment guarantee Act. This was designed to provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment on creating durable community assets through public works programme. Through the manifesto thrust was provided upon establishing labour-intensive industries. The issue of employment was accorded a very special position in the 2004 Lok Sabha Congress election manifesto. The Congress Party focused on devising ways to accelerate the rate of employment and create employment opportunities. Hence, it emphasized that the immediate need would be to revive economic growth and sustain it at the rate of 8 to 10 percent per year. The Congress Party identified certain areas where employment opportunities will be expanded and new jobs will be created. This included the organized sector, the agricultural sector, and horticulture, and aquaculture, afforestation, dairy and agro-processing. The Congress even decided to revamp the functioning of Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the coir industry, handlooms, power looms, handicrafts, sericulture, etc (AICC: 2004).

Health and Education

The Congress in its manifesto vowed to raise public spending on health by 2 to 3 percent of the Gross Domestic Product in the 2004 manifesto with focus on primary health care. The welfare of the Disabled in all the respects also remained as one of the focus of the party. In the pronouncement the Congress declared its intention to introduce a national cooked nutrition mid-day meal scheme in primary and secondary schools across the country and universalize the Integrated Child Development Services for a functional Anganwadi in every settlement. The Congress even pledged to raise public spending on education and set up National Commission on Education. The Congress was seen to be committed to make provisions to provide education for all, including the poor. Education at all stages would be free in all respect for boys and girls belonging to the dalit and adivasi communities (AICC: 2004).

Minorities

The 2004 Congress manifesto found reference of the minorities (religious and linguistic). To arrest the present upsurge in communal violence the Congress had promised to take up measures to promote and maintain communal peace and harmony in the nation and devise law on social violence amounting to payment of compensation, investigation by central agency and prosecution by special court. The party had expressed its desire to establish commission for Minority Educational Institutions. On the issue of Ayodhya the Congress announced with great affirmation that it would abide by the verdict of the courts. The Congress reiterated its commitment to adopt the policy of reservation for the social and educationally backward sections among the Muslims and other religious minorities on a national scale. The Congress had also promised to extend reservations for the economically deprived people (AICC: 2004).

Dalits and Adivasis

The pronouncement saw the Congress concerned about providing jobs for the dalits and adivasis (tribals) in the private sector and promoting a culture of entrepreneurship among them. The Congress had also put emphasis on more effective systems for relief and rehabilitation for the displaced tribals due to developmental projects. State Governments were asked to evolve ways to confer ownership rights to the adivasis (tribals) on the minor forest produce, particularly for those who work in forest. The Congress had even promised to provide fresh look at the developmental strategies for the tribal areas (AICC: 2004).

Kisan and Khet Mazdoors

The Congress in the 2004 Lok Sabha election manifesto had announced that immediate steps would be taken to ease the burden of debt and high interest rates on farm loans so as to provide some solace to the farmers. The flow of agricultural credit would also be accelerated to make things comfortable for the farmers. The Congress had also promised that the farmers all over the country will receive fair and remunerative prices and insurance schemes for both cattle and crop will be

implemented. Profit in agriculture will be the prime concern to improve the condition of the tiller of the soil. Moreover, public investment in irrigation, electrification, research, and marketing would be stepped up. Hence we saw that Congress allotted a special position to the farmers and the labourer's in the rural areas in their election manifesto as a step to revamp their position (AICC: 2004).

Women and Children

Women and children, two very delicate section of the society also acquired a space in the 2004 election manifesto. The first promise it had made was to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha for the women through constitutional amendment. 30 percent of the funds flowing to the local government will be kept for development of women and children. Stern measures would also be taken up for preventing atrocities on women through framing up anti-sati and anti-dowry law; marriage registration will be made mandatory. There will be a major expansion in the schemes for micro-finance for tribal women, women belonging to scheduled castes, for rural women, for women below the poverty lines and women in distress (AICC: 2004).

Food and Nutrition Security

Food and nutrition are the two core issues for millions of Indians. Hence Congress came up with well thought ways for extending food security to the people of India. It had vowed to strengthen the Public distribution system particularly in the poorest and backward blocks of the country with prime focus on families below poverty line. Special schemes to reach food grains to the destitute and infirm through panchayats was one of the agendum for the Congress party promised in the manifesto along with programmes for introducing Antyodaya Cards for all households at risk of hunger. Nutrition programmes for new born babies, especially for the girl child were taken up through the 2004 election manifesto (AICC: 2004).

Regional Development

As always the Congress had promised to work for balanced regional development with emphasis on the North- East and take initiative to ease inter-State disparities through fiscal and other policies to improve in terms of social development and economic growth. To facilitate these initiatives the Congress had decided to set up a System Reform Commission (AICC: 2004).

Panchayati Raj

The Panchayati Raj Institutions got materialized due to the inexorable vision and relentless efforts of Rajiv Gandhi. It should be revamped, insisted the Congress party in the 2004 manifesto, with greater devolution of funds and empowerment of Gram Sabha. Funds for poverty alleviation and rural development programmes will be allotted diligently as and when required, assured the party (AICC: 2004).

Informal and Unorganised Sector

This sector was the thrust area for the Congress for the 2004 election as almost 93 percent of the workforce in our country is in the unorganized sector. Hence Congress had promised to ensure the well-being and welfare of all the workers in this sector, with focus on social insurance and health support. It had promised that special social security schemes already in operation will be expanded to protect the workers against the risks of ill-health, unemployment and old age (AICC: 2004).

Fiscal Policy and Industry

To march ahead in the path of development Congress reiterated with firm commitment to eliminate the revenue deficit of the Central Government in five years so as to spend more on infrastructural development. It even appeared dedicated to revive industrial growth once brought back to power through incentives for boosting private investment accelerating foreign direct investments (AICC: 2004).

Administrative Reforms

The Right to Information Act was made more progressive, responsive, meaningful and useful with increased provisions so as to ensure greater accessibility as well as make the administration more responsive and responsible. The Act was redesigned to make it more participatory. Promises were made to plug the loopholes relating to the inadequacies such as delays, illegal denials to the supply of information. It had even promised to set up another Administrative Reforms Commission to revamp the public administration so as to make it more performance-oriented and accountable. The Congress had reiterated its commitment to unleash electoral and judicial reforms and curb the root causes of corruption with heavy hands (AICC: 2004).

To express its commitment and seriousness to accomplish the promises as made in the Manifesto of 2004 the Congress had announced its decision to present to the people of India a 'Jan Dastavejh' on the progress and success of the implementation of the manifesto (AICC, 2004, pp.17-30). Hence it can be seen that it left no leaf unturned to woo the heart of the common people of India. The provisions in the manifesto and the major accomplishments that have been achieved as claimed by the party are all of pro-people nature which shows the inclination of the party to offer service to the people.

2004 Lok Sabha Election: Revival of INC

With the 14th Lok Sabha Election, 2004 Indian National Congress (INC) emerged as the largest party and assumed power in the centre as the leading party of a coalitional government. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), confident of coming back to power, promised to expand and deepen the economic reforms based on self-reliant approach, sustain and in fact bring a surge in the economic growth rate (Gross Domestic Product), eradicate unemployment and poverty completely. It also vowed to end regional and social disparities and bridge the urban-rural divide (Kumar, 2007, p.62). Its confidence was however shattered by the electoral verdict of the nation. The verdict relegated Vajpayee and his associates to the position of the opposition in the 14th Lok Sabha. A new coalition known as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) with Congress (I) as the leading party came to acquire the position of the ruling party at the centre along with the outside support of the Leftist parties and with Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party by its side.

The 2004 election empirically showed that the legitimacy of the government in power declines due to its inability to deliver as promised, and as Roy and Wallace puts it, "due to stark mismatch between the electoral promises and new economic policies (Kumar, 2007, p.63). The BJP-led NDA government could not match with the expectation of the people of India and failed to perform or deliver as promised during the 1999 electoral campaign. It could not give due respect to the mandate of the people which contributed to its poor electoral performance in the 2004 parliamentary elections. Bharatiya Janata Party bagged 138 seats out of 364 seats with 22.16 percent of votes. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress surpassed the BJP by only 7 seats by securing 145 seats out of the 417 seats with 26.53 percent of votes in the 2004 Lok Sabha election (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress and its allies together could accumulate 219 seats (Sharma, 2004, pp.192-193). Hence, INC-led coalition government came to power and replaced the BJP-led coalition government. The party system at the national level exhibited a competitive multiparty nature and the coalition era remained unaltered.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS SINCE 2004

With the State Assembly Election following the 1999 Lok Sabha election we saw that Congress emerged victorious in many of the states like Punjab (2002 Assembly election), Karnataka (1999 Assembly election), Kerala, Maharashtra. Even the North-eastern states like Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. Even in 2004 Assembly Election to the State of Andhra Pradesh, Congress emerged victorious by winning 185 seats out of 234 seats with 38.56 percent of votes. Telegu Desam Party, the state based party could bag just 47 seats out of the 267 seats that it had contested for, polling 37.59 percent of votes whereas BJP secured only two seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In 2004 State Election to the State Legislature of Karnataka, Indian National Congress could secure 65 seas out of 224 seats with 35.27 percent of votes whereas BJP won the election by securing 79 seats out of 198 seats polling 28.33 percent of votes. In Kerala we saw that with the 2006 State Assembly election CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front coalition government was coming back to power with 61 seats in comparison to the 23 seats with 30.45 percent of votes. INC failed to win the election

for 2006. In 2001 assembly election it emerged victorious with 62 seats in comparison to the 24 seats in 2006 polling 24.09 percent of votes. BJP, however, drew a blank. In Tamil Nadu too DMK emerged victorious with 96 seats out of the 132 seats that it had contested for with 26.46 percent of votes whereas INC won only 34 seats with 8.38 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).

Hence in the Southern part of the country the Indian National Congress could emerge victorious only in Andhra Pradesh by opposing the economic reforms of the Telegu Desam Party under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu. On the contrary Congress made pro-poor electoral promises like free electricity, subsidized crop loans, relief packages to the families of suicide victims, 2.5 lakh jobs for the youth by lifting the ban on recruitment in government services, subsidized cloth scheme, etc. (Kumar, 2007, pp.63-64).

With the State Assembly Election 2007 in the State of Uttar Pradesh, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) emerged victorious by defeating the then ruling Samajwadi Party (SP) with 206 seats out of 403 contested seats polling 30.43 percent of votes. In 2002 Assembly election SP had secured 143 seats. INC could bag just 22 seats in 2006 assembly polls. In Punjab, INC got replaced by Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) by four seats. SAD won 48 seats with 37.09 percent of votes. INC secured 44 seats with 40.90 percent of votes. BJP could win just 19 seats. In 2002 assembly election INC had defeated all the other parties by winning 62 seats whereas SAD had won only 41 seats. In Haryana 2005 Assembly election Congress emerged victorious with 67 assembly seats out of the 90 seats that it had contested for. BJP could secure just 2 seats and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) bagged come 9 seats only. 10 seats were won by Independent candidate (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In Bihar JD (U) kept hold of the reign of control by winning 88 seats with 20.46 percent of votes in October 2005 Assembly polls by displacing RJD which had won 75 seats earlier in the February, 2005 Assembly election. INC stood nowhere in the scenario as it had secured only 10 seats, whereas BJP secured 55 seats in October 2005 assembly polls. The BJP won 18 more seats, earlier in February in had won 37 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Therefore, in the North we saw that Indian National Congress was totally wiped out by the state-based parties.

In the West too Congress got marginalized with the subsequent assembly polls following the 2004 general election. In Maharashtra INC could secure 69 seats with 21.06 percent of votes in the 2004 assembly election. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) secured the highest number of seats 71 with 18.75 percent of votes and Shiv Sena, the state based party won 62 seats with 19.97 percent of votes whereas BJP secured 54 seats only. However the NCP – Congress combine formed a coalition government to rule the state. In the 2007 State Assembly election to the state of Gujarat BJP swept the polls by securing 117 seats out of the 182 seats polling 49.12 percent of votes. INC won 59 seats out of 173 seats with 38.00 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). In the west, too, presence of Congress was not overwhelming.

In the state of West Bengal the CPI (M) swept the polls with 176 seats, polling 37.13 percent of votes. With 2006 state assembly polls INC won only 21 seats and BJP drew a blank. In the 2004 Assembly Election to the State of Orissa (now Odisha) too INC failed to win the state election. It secured 38 seats polling 34.82 percent of votes whereas the BJP secured 32 seats. It was the Biju Janata Dal, the state based party of Navin Patnaik which emerged victorious with 61 seats out of the 84 seats polling 27.36 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in).

In the Eastern part of the country too Congress had failed to cast its impact. However, in 2006 Assembly Election which was held against a relatively peaceful atmosphere with repeated talks with United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) militants. Congress emerged victorious by winning 53 seats out of the 120 seats that it had contested for with 31.08 percent of votes whereas BJP secured only 10 seats and AGP, the state based party bagged only 24 seats out of 100 seats with 20.39 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress had drawn massive support from the Muslims of the Char region. However, it is being said that for Congress the formation of All India United Democratic Front (AUDF) can be a big challenge for 2012 Assembly election. For AUDF is gradually taking over the Congress's Muslim vote bank.

In Arunachal Pradesh too the Congress emerged victorious in the 2004 assembly polls by winning 34 seats out of the 60 contested seats with 44.41 percent of votes. BJP could win just 9 seats whereas Arunachal Congress could win just 2 seats. In the State Assembly Election 2007 to the Legislative Assembly of Manipur Congress won 30 seats out of the 59 seats that it had contested for. CPI won 4 seats and NCP bagged 5 seats. 10 seats were secured by Independent candidates (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence

it was again Congress which swept the assembly polls in Manipur. Thus the Congress could not emerge victorious in majority of the states. It is the state-based parties which has emerged victorious in majority of the states.

Congress however could restore back itself to power at the Centre by dethroning the BJP-led NDA government. The comeback of the Congress was not absolute. The people's verdict was just in favour of a Congress-led secular combine. It is pretty well discernible that the Congress would require a lot to do and deliver governance to the people to revive itself in the major states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab and in the remaining states. Thus, although the centre was marked by the Congress-led government but the majority of the states had non-Congress governments. Hence the trend of fragmentation of the Indian Party System remained unaltered. Hence the Congress restoration was not comprehensive. Whatsoever the Indian National Congress was able to rejuvenate itself to the position of the largest party, although it could not manage to secure an absolute majority. Congress was the leading partner in the 2004 coalition government at the centre. Hence, this marks only an early sign of its rejuvenation. The 2004 Lok Sabha and the subsequent assembly elections led to the emergence of fragmented competitive multi-party Indian Party System with resurgence of the Indian National Congress as the largest party at the centre.

The Populist Measures UPA I Adopted to Sustain its Credibility

Manmohan Singh assumed the august post of the Prime Minister with the 14th Lok Sabha on 22nd May, 2004 after Sonia Gandhi, the Congress President declined the post. The UPA government adopted a Common Minimum Programme (CMP). The CMP included setting up of a target for economic growth at the rate of 7 to 8 percent per year, ensuring legal guarantee of 100 days work, revitalizing the labour laws, strengthening the public distribution system, passing the bill of one-third reservation of seats for women in Assemblies and Lok Sabha, cess on central taxes, introduction of value Added Tax, bill to give women, equal rights on ownership of assets, a model comprehensive law to deal with communal violence, amending labour laws, immediate implementation of National Employment Guarantee Act, establishing Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, introducing and getting passed a

bill on curbing domestic violence and gender discrimination, enhancing energy security along with a integrated energy policy etc. (Sharma, 2004, pp.233-234). Hence, the Common Minimum Programme became the basis of governance of the coalition. This comeback for the Congress party was very significant and crucial. Hence, to respect the May 2004 mandate Congress led UPA combine had to deliver sincerely and perform diligently. The accomplishment of the Congress-led UPA government since May 2004 was substantially visible and palpable. At the end of five year tenure of the Congress-led UPA government claimed that they were able to translate to a great extent their electoral promises into reality unlike the 1999 BJP-led NDA government.

The Congresss' Proclaimed Major Accomplishments (2004-2009)

Within a year after assumption of power the government made a historic legislation by passing the Right to Information Act on 15th June, 2005. This Act ensures greater disclosures. It empowered citizens in towns, cities and villages to demand information on policies, projects and programmes of the government that are implemented in the name of public interest. It enabled the citizens to demand responsiveness and accountability from public official and government at all levels. It sought to make the administration transparent and humane ever before. It was a bold step to reduce corruption at all levels and promote public good (AICC, 2009, pp.2-7). In their bid to fulfil a promise made in the Manifesto 2004 it enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to ensure social justice and equity and as a drive to alleviate poverty of the rural poor. It was enacted to provide in all districts 100 days of legally guaranteed work to each rural household in every financial year in public works programme. The essence of the Act is to enhance livelihood security to lakhs of poor rural families and simultaneously enable creation of durable community asses. Every household was able to demand 100 days work from the government through this Act. The NREGA Scheme was different from earlier wage programme as it provided legally guaranteed employment to the rural poor with greater transparency and accountability. Hence it was portrayed as a path-breaking achievement by the 2004-2009 Congress-led UPA government. The scheme also maintained that one-third of the workforce should be women with no wage discrimination between men

and women (AICC, 2009, pp.2-16). The Congress Party claimed that the scheme has provided employment to 2.10 Crore rural households, made the rural women economic independent and enabled them to break their shackles, provided employment to rural poor belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. With the implementation of the scheme the land productivity is also said to have improved (AICC, 2009). It announced through the 2009 manifesto that it was able to implement its 'Bharat Nirman' programme and achieve considerable progress in transforming rural India by expanding and providing better irrigation facilities, all weather roads, houses for the poor, drinking water, electricity for all poor families, phone connectivity, opening up of more schools, health-centres in all villages (AICC, 2009, p.8).

The Congress has promised in its Manifesto to provide solace to crores of farmers by easing debt burden in its 2004 Manifesto. As a part of it, the Congress-led UPA government claimed that it had brought comfort and security to crores of farmers and their families by announcing

(i) by waiving loans up to Rs.65,000 Crore complete waiver of all loans for marginal farmers;

(ii) by extending irrigation facilities

(iii) Increase in the procurement prices;

(iv) by increasing three-fold credit from banks and reducing interest rates on crop loans (AICC, 2009, p.8).

It claimed to launch the National Rural Health Mission so as to make a positive impact by improving the quality and accessibility of primary health care in villages, along with availability of trained health professionals (AICC, 2009, p.8). The government made efforts to empower the disadvantaged sections of the society and provided Scheduled Tribes and traditional forest dwellers rights over land they cultivate in forest areas. It even provided 27 percent reservations for Other Backward Class students in all professional institutions and enhanced scholarships for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities and other backward classes to pursue higher education (AICC, 2009, pp.8-9).It also claimed that during its reign in the interest of the women, the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 to protect women from domestic violence was enacted. It also through a legislation accorded equal rights upon women

to inherit property (AICC, 2009, p.9). The Congress claimed that it had increased investment in higher education and opened up many more colleges, institutes of technology and management. It had during its tenure taken initiative to strengthen the 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan' and introduced a cooked mid-day meal scheme in all primary schools which in turn has increased the rate of school-goers in the rural as well as urban areas (AICC, 2009, p.9). It had even claimed to have delivered record economic growth of 8.5 percent during the five year tenure and increased spending in agriculture, infrastructural building, municipal services, education and health. Due to economic growth, the Congress-led UPA government was able to introduce 'Aam Admi Bima Yojana' for landless households and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana for six crore unorganized sector workers (AICC, 2009, p.9). Family welfare projects were also undertaken in unorganized and semi-organized sector. National commission for Enterprises in the unorganized sector was set up in 2004 to examine the problems of the workers in the sector and to suggest measures to overcome them as well as review the social security schemes available to them. Unorganized Sector Workers' Social Security Bill, 2005 and unorganized sector Workers' (Condition of work and livelihood Protection Bill), 2005 were also drafted during the UPA tenure. It has taken initiative to allocate financial resources from the Centre to the State Government at a scale never known before. Besides it has also upgraded resource allocation for upgrading infrastructure and basic services for urban poor along with construction of 14 lakh houses for the poor (AICC, 2009, pp.9-10). The UPA government also claimed to have provided India a stature as global power by entering into civil nuclear agreements on their terms solely and provides India with energy security. Besides, efforts have been taken to meet with external and internal security challenges by raising the capability of the combating forces (AICC, 2009, p.10).[9]

The UPA government had to face a crisis on the verge of the expiry of its tenure when the leftist parties withdrew their outside support from the ruling government due to differences in opinion regarding the nuclear deal with United States of America. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India was able to make his government somehow survive the non-confidence motion with the support of Samajwadi Party. Hence the government was able to complete its tenure and Manmohan Singh could

[9] The Congress has been able to enact and implement many of these plans of actions into operation although an impartial assessment and findings can tell whether these initiatives were actually able to reap the desired objectives.

complete his tenure as the Prime Minister of the country. Consequently the nation was able to have a stable government under the aegis of the Congress Party.

With the dawn of the 15th Lok Sabha election the Indian National Congress sought a renewed mandate from the people so that it can carry forward all its progressive work, programmes, missions and schemes that had been launched during 2004-2009 tenure. When the general election to the 15th Lok Sabha was declared the Congress decided to contest the election alone at the national level and make alliances with comfortable regional parties only at the state level (Kailash, 2009, pp.52-53).

2009 Congress's Populist and Positivist Lok Sabha Election Manifesto

The Indian National Congress announced its work programmes for the period of 2009-2014, rededicating itself to the service of the people and strengthening the foundations of India. The work programmes contained some affirmative promises to the people of India. Hence it gave the call *"Aam Admi Ke Badhte Kadam Har Kadam Par Bharat Buland"* (AICC, 2009). The Indian National Congress promised to continue with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and vowed to ensure guaranteed 100 days work and increase wage to Rs.100 a day for every one falling under the Act. The Congress party pledged to enact a Right to Food law that will guarantee access to sufficient food for all people and 25 Kilogram of rice or wheat per month at 3 per kg for people living below poverty line. It even tried to formulate subsidized community and proposed to provide kitchens in all cities for houseless and migrants with the aid of the central government. The Congress promised to provide security to each and every citizen and adopt zero tolerance towards terrorism. To ensure transparency the Congress announced that it would take measures to provide every Indian with a unique identity card. For the rural poor the Congress in the 2009 manifesto further promised to provide health security for all and assured to cover over the next years every family living below the poverty line by the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana introduced by the Congress led UPA government during its first tenure 2004-2009 (AICC: 2009).

The 2009 election manifesto included provisions to ensure greater facilities for the disadvantaged and deprived sections of the society and hence the party through its

pronouncement had assured for a comprehensive social security to urban homeless, disabled and elderly people, released bonded workers, to the members of primitive tribal groups and to the members of designated "most backward" dalit communities as well as to single women headed households (AICC: 2009).

The empowerment of weaker sections of the society found a very important position in the 2009 manifesto. The Congress reiterated its faith to protect the interest of this section of the society comprising of women, dalit, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, minorities and OBCs. Education at all stages for boys and girls will be free. There will be a surge in the recruitment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for filling up 53,000 vacancies along with protection of these section in the private sector jobs too (AICC: 2009).

It had even reiterated its commitment to provide quality education to all and expand higher education with focus on excellence and provide scholarship or educational loan. It had even promised to ensure quality education for school children and improve the physical environment in schools and impart training to teachers. To improve skill of the youth a National Skill Development Mission was initiated during its 2004-2009 tenure. The party had promised in 2009 manifesto to move ahead with the scheme and in fact increase the fund allocation over it. Besides, continuing and implementing all the programmes, the Congress had vowed to provide access to bank credit to all the small and marginal farmers at lower interest rates. It had even made a new announcement to provide interest relief to all farmers who repay loans on schedule and ensure that farming become a profitable occupation (AICC: 2009).

To respect the sentiments of the Muslims a separate Ministry for Minority Affairs was created in May 2004 and implementation of the recommendations of the Sachar Committee has been initiated to ameliorate the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community. The Congress had also promised to reserve one-third of all central government jobs for women and pass a bill for reserving 33 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures in the 15th Lok Sabha (AICC: 2009).

The Congress in its manifesto provided sharp focus on the issue of needs of the children and the issue of girl child. A National Commission for Protection of Child Rights was established in 2006 to ensure that the welfare of the children is protected

and promoted. New laws to prohibit child labour and child marriage has been passed and will be abided by religiously New Schemes to improve nutritional status of children, especially girl child and to educate them has been passed and will be continued sincerely assured the Indian National Congress. It even assured to universalize the ICDS by March 2012 and promised to introduce special incentives for the girl child which will include monetary incentive for education till the higher secondary level. The Congress reiterated in the 2009 manifesto its commitment of devolving more functions, funds and functionaries to the panchayats and upgrade them with technical capabilities to enhance their effectiveness (AICC: 2009).

In the wake of atrocities on the dalits and women the INC resolved to combat communalism of all kinds and deal with heavy hands with the perpetrators. It had even promised for right to compensation and rehabilitations for all victims of communal and ethnic violence. It even pledged to connect every villages to a broadband network in three years time and give new look to urban governance and strive to maintain the path of high growth with fiscal prudence and low inflation as well as continue with efforts to give support to public sector to grow and survive along with emphasis on privatization (AICC: 2009).

The Indian National Congress even reposed its confidence in the youth who comprises the majority of our population and have time and again inducted young men and women into the party and entrusted them with responsibilities. Congress through its manifesto also committed itself by proposing numerous measures to preserve and promote our heritage and natural environment and ensure energy security for our country. Rural electrification, oil and gas exploration was accorded priority (AICC, 2009, pp.13-29). Hence, all the grassroots issues which found space in 2004 manifesto and were implemented during 2004-2009 tenure of Congress-led UPA government was again incorporated in the 2009 manifesto with additional provisions and facilities.

Popularity and 2009 Lok Sabha Election

The Indian National Congress not only unleashed sound economic policies and framed prospective populist electoral promises but also adopted numerous correct political manoeuvrings. Earlier Sonia Gandhi had campaigned aggressively to resurge

the popularity and the lost glory of the party and saved the Congress Party from slipping down into a complete oblivion. Then after 11 years with the 2009 Lok Sabha polls Rahul Gandhi followed her footsteps and campaigned extensively to sustain the popularity of the party. Rahul Gandhi emerged as the star campaigner for the party during the election campaign of 2009. He campaigned extensively for reviving the lost bases in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Gujarat. The Congress general secretary had covered 230 constituencies and had held extensive rallies to revive the lost bases of the Congress. Restructuring the party structure and introduction of inner democracy in the youth wings of the Congress yielded dividends for the party. He was able to induce enthusiasm and encouragement among the young Congress workers and the new young voters.

Thus the general election to the 15th Lok Sabha held during April-May 2009 saw a comprehensive victory for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) with Congress as its leading partner. In fact, it was for the first time in the last twenty five years a government that had completed its full term got re-elected. Besides, for the first time there was a change in equation within the system of coalitional form of government. The return of the ruling UPA to office in 2009 was due to the resounding popular mandate which reflected a distinct undercurrent support for it. Consequently, the Advani-led NDA was made to bite the dust and the left-led 'third front' was wiped out completely who had build castles in the air to form a non-Congress, non-BJP government at the Centre. There was no "wave" as such in the country against or in favour of any particular party but certainly there was a subdued and invisible "surge" and support for the Congress Party.

2009 Lok Sabha Election: A 'more' Resurged Congress

Congress for the first time since 1991 was able to cross the two hundred mark and secured 206 seats out of the 440 seats that it had contested for, polling 28.56 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in). The UPA comprised of Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Dravida Munnetra Khazhagam, the National Conference, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, Republican Party of India, Indian Union Muslim League (MUL), Kerala Congress (Mani), etc. apart from the Indian National Congress. The UPA captured 262 seats, just 11 seats short of absolute majority polling 36.46 percent of

votes. With the 2009 Lok Sabha election the UPA was able to secure some 86 more seats than it had secured in the 2004 election (Rai, 2009, p.203). NDA stood distant second with 159 seats. BJP secured only 116 seats with 18.80 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in). The Third Front could bag just 80 seats. The Fourth Front (which was formed suddenly prior to the election) could manage to score just 27 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The country voted in favour of a Congress led secular combine and against the Advani-led NDA alliance and the people also uprooted the "Third force" that was there to somehow capture power.[10] The electorate indisputably voted for a 'stable' and 'able' government at the centre. Thus, the present decade did provide stability and continuity to the party system. However, the era of coalition politics remained unaltered and undisturbed. However, the Indian National (INC) played a more assertive role as a coalitional maker, having more control over the bargaining process during the formation of the government for 2009-2014.

One of the significant features of this election was the comeback of the Congress party in the state of Uttar Pradesh where it had secured 21 seats, two seats less than the Samajwadi Party and one seat more than the BSP (http://www.eci.nic.in). [11] The Congress decided to fight the general election alone after the Samajwadi Party refused to allay with it. A large segment of the Muslims voted for Congress this time across the state. Even a substantial chunk of Brahmins, Dalit and Extremely Backward Caste communities in select constituencies voted in favour of the party which contributed towards its revival in the state. The high pitched campaign by Rahul Gandhi and his initiative to run up the organization at the grassrsoot paid dividends for the party. The Indian National Congress performed well in almost all the states. It performed well in Rajasthan (2004- 4 seats/ 2009- 20seats), Haryana (2004- 9seats/ 2009- 9 seats), Arunachal Pradesh (2004- no seats/ 2009- 2 seats), Andhra Pradesh (2004- 29 seats/ 2009- 33seats), Manipur(2004- 1 seat/ 2009- 2seats), Delhi (2004- 6 seats/ 2009- 7 seats), Chandigarh (2004- 1 seats/ 2009- 1seat), Punjab(2004- 2 seats/ 2009- 8 seats), and Uttarakhand (2004- 1 seats/ 2009- 1 seat). It improved its performance in Madhya Pradesh (2004- 4seats/ 2009- 12 seats), Orissa (2004- 2 seats/ 2009- 6 seats),

[10] Strong government and decisive leadership was the two major plank on the basis of which the BJP wanted to cast its spell among the masses. The party had nothing in content with regard to good governance. It neither could offer any sound and appealing policies on development or livelihood issues. *See* "Saffron Intact", Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. XLIV, No.7, p.5.

[11] Many of them voted in favour of Congress and hence the UPA because of the waiver in farm loan and secondly for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. See Gupta, 'The Congress' Surprise in Uttar Pradesh' Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. XLIV, No. 22, May 30, 2009, p.19.

recovered its lost ground in Kerala (2004- 0 seats/ 2009- 13 seats), excelled with its allies in Maharashtra (2004- 13 seats/ 2009- 17 seats).[12].

The principal opposition party the BJP lost ground in Rajasthan (2004- 21 seats/ 2009- 4seats). It could not do even much in Maharashtra despite of its alliance with Shiv Sena (2004-13 seats/ 2009- 9 seats). Though it had achieved success in Gujarat (2004- 14 seats/ 2009- 15 seats), Chhattisgarh (2004-10seats/ 2009-10seats), Jharkhand (20041seat/ 20098seats), Himachal Pradesh (2004-1seat/ 2009 3seats) and Karnataka (2004-18seats/ 2009-19seats) but could not do much in Bihar (2004-5seats/ 2009-12seats) or in the other states in south. Neither was it able to make its presence felt in Andhra Pradesh despite of allying with Telegu Deasam Party nor could do much in Tamil Nadu.[13] The left-led Third front also gave a dismal performance. With the 2009 Lok Sabha election it was relegated to the eighth position in the newly elected Lok Sabha from the position of the third largest front in the outgoing Lok Sabha (2004-2009).

Hence the bottom line of the general election 2009 was the "Resurgence of the Indian National Congress" because of its more responsible, more future oriented visions and pro-people image. The common people of India was also unable to grasp the intellectual projections made by the left despite of its efforts to make the 2004-2009 UPA government abide by the Common Minimum Programme. The key to the success of the Congress party lies in its projection as an advocate of democratic socialism. Moreover, the NREGA, the flagship scheme of the party and the waiving of farm loan yielded positive for the Congress Party.[14] Its emphasis on egalitarianism and its appealing slogan of "AAM ADMI" was rewarded accurately. It was able to highlight a pro-people image and cut a niche in people's mind. Besides, the Congress Party was able to adopt correct manners, strategies and make effective alliance partners which paid off manifold. Alliance with Trinamool Congress and DMK brought considerable success for the party in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

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[12] *See* Statewise seats won by Congress and BJP in the 2004 Lok Sabha election http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/LS_2004/Vol_I_LS_2004.pdf *Also See* Statewise seats won by Congress and BJP in the 2009 Lok Sabha election http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/archiveofge2009/Stats/VOLII/STATE_PARTYWISESEATWONANDVOTES_LokSabha2009_24012014.pdf

[13] The party's polarizing ideology led to loss of bases in many states and also kept it bereft of any prospective alliance partner.

[14] NREGA has been a step to reach the poor. But it has been alleged that due to the implementation of the scheme through the bureaucracy the PRIs has been undermined and surpassed.

BJP on the contrary could not provide any alternative leader after Vajpayee's retirement. [15] A vacuum was created in the leadership position of the party which no one could fulfil. On the contrary the Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Rahul Gandhi appeared to be the next election leaders. The RJD leader, Lalu Prasad Yadav was defeated in Pataliputra and could not win from Saran. His party gave a dismal performance. The Lok Jan Shakti Party as well performed miserably in Bihar and its leader Ram Vilas Paswan was defeated in his own constituency. This election yielded results for those who performed and preferred for governance and development. Thus, Congress was paid off in many areas. Such as in Andhra Pradesh, the Congress and its members continuously monitored the implementation of NREGA projects, provided emergency services and implemented cheap rice project, free electricity for agriculture, etc. The charm of 'Hindutva' has become stale in all forms and incarnations. The voters rejected the negative and self-motivated policies of the left and the caste based divisive agenda of Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samajwadi Party or of Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

At the state level too the Congress was improving its performance. With State Assembly Election, 2009 the State of Andhra Pradesh was seen to give Congress the mandate to rule the State. Chief Minister Y.S. Rajashekhara Reddy steered the Congress to victory in Andhra Pradesh. In both the election, Lok Sabha as well as State Assembly, the people of Andhra Pradesh voted in favour of the Congress. The Congress won 33 out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats and won 157 out of 294 seats in 2009 Assembly election (http://www.eci.nic.in).

There was no viable alternative for Congress in the state. Disarray in opposition and inability among the opposition parties to emerge as the potential alternative worked in advantage for the Congress in both the elections. BJP is almost non-existent in the state. Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) of 'cine-star' K. Chiranjeevi won 18 Assembly seats and drew a blank in Lok Sabha election. It had managed to spoil Telegu Desam Party's (TDP) chances of wresting power from Congress by eroding its vote bank. Telegu Desam Party contested in 225 seats and won only 92 seats in the assembly election. BJP won 2 seats and Lok Satta Party (LSP) of Jay Prakash Narayan, a bureaucrat turned politician won only 1 seat (http://www.eci.nic.in).

[15] The party had very few young leaders to project before a large chunk of young voters.

The spell of Telegu Desam party was on the wane in the state. Reddy had initiated many developmental and welfare programmes in the state which included a new irrigation project, provision of old age pensions, subsidized housing schemes, supply of rice at Rs. 2/- a kilogram to the poor, the novel health insurance scheme, 'Rajiv Arogyasri' ensured that the votes of Congress remained un-eroded. Caste factor played a very insignificant role in the election to the state this time. (Frontline, 2009, Vol. 20, Issue 11).

Haryana went for its assembly polls in October 13, 2009. The electorate of the state of Haryana gave a mixed verdict with no clear majority for any party. Although the ruling Congress remained the single largest party by winning 40 out of the 90 assembly seats. Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) of Chautala gained only 31 seats. Haryana Janhit Congress bagged only 6 seats. BJP could secure just 4 seats. Bahujan Samaj Party and Shiromani Akali Dal both secured just one seat each. 7 were bagged by Independent candidates in the 2009 assembly pools (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress was short of five seats from majority. The Congress actually benefitted from fragmented opposition in the state (The Hindu, Oct. 23, 2009).

The Indian National Congress was even able to sweep the polls in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in 2009. The Congress came to power for a second consecutive term under the stewardship of Dorjee Khandu. Out of the total 60 seats the Congress had bagged 42 seats. The performance of the party had in fact improved in the state as in the 2004 assembly polls the party had won 34 seats. The National Congress Party (NCP) won 5 seats in comparison to its 2 seats in 2004 assembly polls. Trinamool Congress made its debut in the state and won five seats. BJP won only 3 seats out of the 18 seats that it had contested for the 2009 assembly polls. The People's Party of Arunachal (PDA) the lone regional party won just 4 seats while 1 seat was bagged by an Independent candidate (http://www.eci.nic.in). In Sikkim, Sikkim Democratic Front emerged victorious with 32 seats and polling 65.9 percent of votes whereas INC drew a blank.

In the House of 288, the Congress party had secured 82 seats and was in the position to form the government with decade old ally NCP in Maharashtra with the 2009 assembly polls. The ruling combine had in fact improved its performance in the state and returned to power for the third time consecutively. NCP bagged 62 seats in 2009. Although in 2005 assembly polls it had secured 71 seats. Congress had in fact

improved its performance in the state as it secured 82 seats as against its 69 seats in 2005 assembly polls. Congress emerged as the largest party in the state surpassing all the other political forces such as the BJP, the Shiv Sena and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), the political novice in the state. BJP could secure just 46 seats as against its 54 seats in 2005. Shiv Sena secured 44 seats as against 62 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Meanwhile Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) a new force which had emerged in the state under the stewardship of Raj Thackery which proclaimed that it identifies with the cause of the middle class maharashtrians, their anxieties and needs and also claimed that the party is embedded in maharashtrians ethos and interests with a modern outlook. He even took up the cause of unemployment and portrayed himself as a strong leader who will protect maharashtrian interests from the outsiders. He used a conservative populism to expand the base of the party in the state. (http://manase.org/#).

The party could not do much in the 2009 assembly polls and secured just 13 seats (http://www.eci.nicin). MNS had in fact destabilized Shiv Sena in the state. Shiv Sena had put up a very poor performance in the assembly polls. The MNS eroded its votes to a great extent which had in fact sealed off the electoral fate of BJP–Shiv Sena combine. The votes got divided between the Shiv Sena and the MNS and this produced a split verdict which led to the victory of the Congress–NCP led alliance. The Congress – NCP coalition came to power and touched the half way mark of 144 out of 288 assembly seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

Even the State of Jharkhand had conducted its assembly polls for the year 2009. The Jharkhand Assembly election had thrown up a hung house with no party or alliance near the half-way mark of 42. It is a house of 81 members. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) won 16 seats one seat short of that it had won in 2005. Congress won 13 seats. The Jharkhand Vikash Morcha (Prajatantrik) bagged only 9 seats. The performance of BJP suffered a setback in the state. It won 18 seats in comparison to the 30 seats that it had secured in 2005 Assembly polls. JD (K) its ally in the state won only 2 seats as against its 6 seats it had won in 2005. AJSU won only 5 seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). The Congress did not emerge victorious in the state with the 2009 polls. In Orissa Biju Janata Dal (BJD) emerged victorious with 103 seats polling 38.86 percent of seats. INC could bag 27 seats with 27.10 percent of votes and BJP could win 6 seats http://www.eci.nic.in).

Hence, all these indicate that the Congress was able to rejuvenate itself from the state of decline[16] and was able to revive itself in lot many states either by improving its performance or by retaining its bases (although it could not secure absolute majority on its own). The 2009 Lok Sabha polls clearly marked the 'resurgence' of the Congress Party in the Indian political system.[17] The Indian party retained its competitive multi-party nature and the trend of fragmentation as well coalition politics remained unchanged. However, with the presence of diversity in regional aspirations, culture and demands the quantitative and qualitative growth of regional parties will remain an indispensable phenomenon of the Indian political system. The UPA has been the handiwork of the Congress party. In many states it was seen that it was able to win back its credibility. Caste based politics also had no more meaning for the present generation of people. Hence, the future-oriented visions and the progressive attitude of the Congress party actually paid large dividends for the party. The pro-people image and its projection as the party of the 'aam admi' was another factor which helped in its resurrection. Hence the four parameters such as popularity, populism, positivism and performance largely determined the trajectory of the party system at both the levels.

General Election to the 16th Lok Sabha

The General Election to the 16th Lok sabha held during April- May 2014 saw a comprehensive victory for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with a very pronounced verdict. Such a victory is bound to invite some interpretations as BJP is not dependent on any of its pre-poll allies to form the government at the Union level. The 2014 Lok Sabha election establishes the fact that the country craves and stands for 'development' and aspires for 'good governance.[18] The strategy of alluring the electorate with the 'Gujarat development model' reaped benefits for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The series of corruption charges and scams, the issue of rising prices of essential commodities hurting the ordinary people, spiralling inflation,

[16] Though the extent of dominance was not similar to that which existed during the fifties and the early sixties. Congress then had secured absolute majority and had formed the government on its own and was the *'Majority Party'* in the Indian Party System.

[17] The word resurgence means rising or arising again; tending to rise again, Sykes, 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English', 1982, p.889.

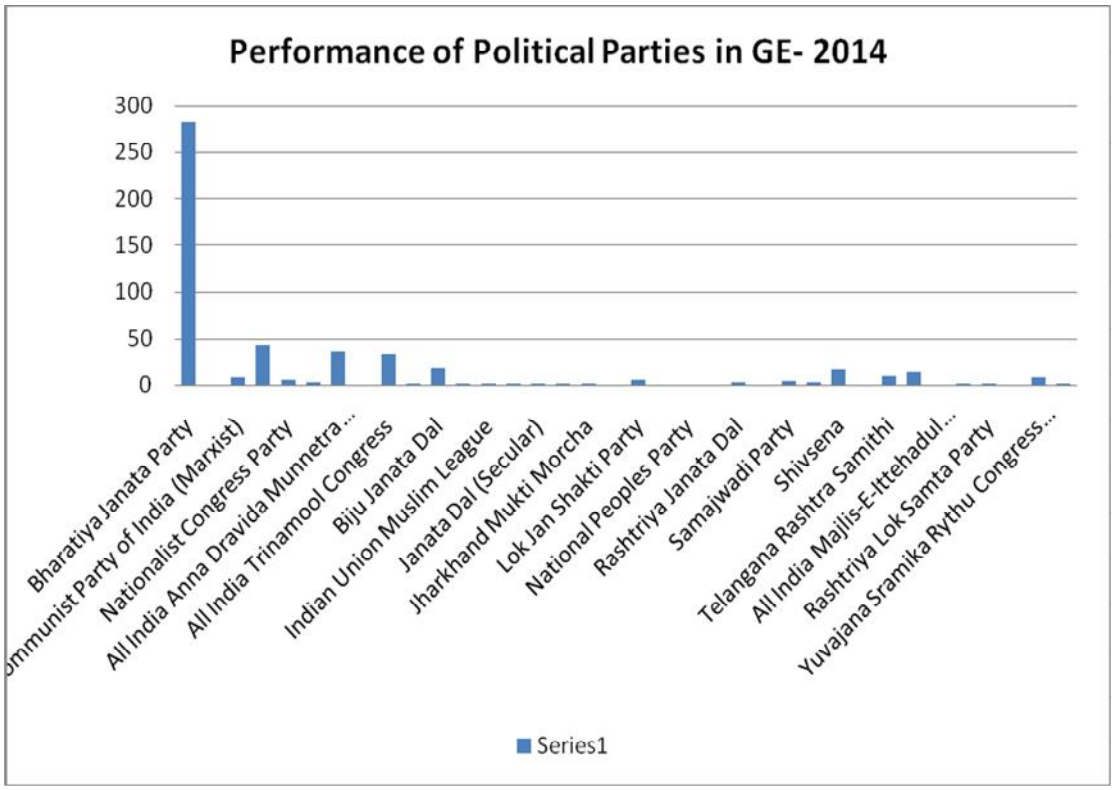
[18] *"Only NDA can bring about change in India: Narendra Modi"*, www.ndtv.com, May 11, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 10:45 am).

faltering growth, weakening currency, rising fiscal deficit, falling sensex, rising cases of crimes against women etc. wrested the chances of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government from coming to power for the third consecutive time.

Interpreting the General Elections 2014

The election to the 16th Lok Sabha produced a mandate that installed a 'party' at the central level with absolute majority that is otherwise marked for its indulgence in fanatic Hindu fundamentalism to rule a country that pledges in the name of secularism. Unprecedented popularity earned through rigorous media advertising, undying hope and unparalleled electoral campaign of Narendra Modi saw the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerging as the largest party by securing an absolute majority on its own with 282 seats polling 31.34 percent of votes and 22.85 percent of seats. BJP along with its allies secured 336 seats and Congress with its allies secured only 59 seats. Left Front has secured 11 seats only (http://www.eci.nic.in). The nation has offered Modi and his government a chance to deliver growth and governance without any hurdles by reposing their faith in him and thereby bestowing him with maximum number of seats.

Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was forced to bite the dust. Indian National Congress (INC) secured 44 seats polling 19.52 percent of votes and 9.52 percent of seats. INC was reduced to double digits for the first time in the general election. In 2009 Lok Sabha election INC individually had secured 206 seats. It secured 162 less seats in this election in comparison to 2009 Lok Sabha election. This is BJP's best ever performance in a general election since its inception in 1980. It has bagged 166 seats more than 2009 general election (htt://www.eci.nic.in).



Source: Figures available from Election Commission of India website http://eciresults.nic.in/

2014 Lok Sabha Polls: Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism

The BJP resorted to its sole trump card Narendra Modi (who had been chosen consecutively thrice as the chief minister of Gujarat) and his well professed 'Gujarat model'[19]of development for winning the 2014 election. The recent assembly elections of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat resurged gallons of confidence within the Bharatiya Janata Party. BJP benefitted immensely from the fallouts of Congress-led UPA government which was voted back to power for the second time for its pro-people agenda. The second tenure has been a watershed for UPA II as it got riddled with series of corruption charges such as 2G spectrum scam, Commonwealth Games scam, Adarsh Housing society scam, Augusta Westland chopper scam, Railway bribery and coal mine scam that maligned its pro-people image based on which it had revived itself to the centre stage with the 14th general election. These cases of corruption caused huge losses amounting to crores of rupees to the national exchequer

[19] For understanding of 'Gujarat Model' See http://www.narendramodi.in/

and this antagonized the common man. Rising cases of crimes against women questioned the administrative credibility of the UPA II government.

The pangs of hunger for development and better governance compelled the Indian electorate to vote for a change in government from Congress-led UPA to a BJP-led government[20]. The crux for survival for any government in power in a developing country like India which is always yearning for progress and massive development in all the parameters is to 'perform' and translate rhetoric into intent. The corrupt image of the Congress and DMK have contributed negatively towards the electoral fortune of the Congress led UPA coalition and had produced serious repercussions that solely contributed positively towards the electoral fate of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The projection of Narendra Modi, the sculpted icon of development, aroused hope (positivity) among the people of the country that they can now taste development. Assurance of rural growth and generation of rural jobs, pro-active, pro-people good governance along with emphasis upon inclusive and sustainable development worked wonder for the party[21]. In Modi people saw hope and credibility because he has been voted thrice back to power by the people of Gujarat[22].

The Reasons why BJP emerged as the 'new' *Majority Party*

Highly strategized and calculated campaign by BJP reaped benefits for the party. Emphasizing on core issues like development, good governance and covertly gliding with its core ideology of Hindutva politics or politics based on religion to consolidate its base when required then quickly shifting its campaigning strategy towards caste-based politics by wooing Dalits, OBCs to form new and enhanced support bases produced wonder for the party. Hence it has touched all the basic issues of concern as politics in India revolves around issues like religion, caste, development and aspiration for good governance. The repeated insistence of good days lying ahead (*acche din aane wale hain*) if Modi is voted to power was also able to catch the fancies of the development starving nation. It used every possible medium to spread the aura of Modi and resorted to emphatic and effective slogans like '*aab ki baar*

[20] *"Leadership factor in 2014 polls"*, The Hindu, May 28, 2014.
[21] BJPElectionManifesto(2014):http://www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2014/full_manifesto_english_07.04.2014.pdf

[22] *"India has won! Good days ahead: Modi"*, The Hindu, May 16, 2014.

*Modi Sarkar' (*this time it should be Modi-led government*), 'Sabka saath, sabka vikas' (*collective efforts inclusive growth) to highlight its willingness to adhere to an all inclusive policy and eschew its majoritarinian policy[23]. Its majoritarinian and fundamentalist attitude was its biggest loophole that has prevented the Bharatiya Janata Party to have greater mass appeal in this secular country. The minorities and the disadvantageous section of the society have since the Bombay and Gujarat riot have perceived BJP with scepticism, fear and disdain.

Moreover, placing Amit Shah in charge of election campaign in Uttar Pradesh played dividends for the party. Shah is credited to have crafted a very well planned election campaign in the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P) by meticulously preparing a consortium of diligent cadres, striking every chord correctly with regard to caste calculations as well as simultaneously pursuing its traditional *hindutva* politics by wooing its core support base of the upper caste Hindus. BJP retained its hard line Hindu credentials. During the 1980s the communal agenda of BJP cantered on issues like Babri mosque, construction of Ram temple and the city of Ayodhya. Earlier it mobilized Hindu voters through anti-cow slaughter movement during the 1966-67 and insisted and protested in front of the Parliament to pass law for prohibiting it. In the 2014 electoral campaign apart from issues like development, eradication of corruption, good governance, mobilization in the name of 'identity' was also pursued as BJP had opted the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the most religiously significant Hindu city on the bank of sacred river Ganges, as its citadel and subtly remained associated with its pro-Hindutva strategy to attract its vote from its traditional bases such as upper-caste, urban Hindus, small and middle businessmen and Hindu traders, cultivators, etc.(Hansen & Jaffrelot, p.4, 1996). Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state that sends eighty Member of Parliament to Lok Sabha. Since the presence of the party was not much impressive in the north-east and down south therefore winning maximum number of seats from the most populous Hindi heartland state[24]was imperative for the party to capture power at the centre. Therefore, to rekindle the feeling of 'being Hindu' and to popularize Modi, its prime ministerial candidate for Lok sabha election

[23] BJPElectionManifesto(2014):http://www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2014/full_manifesto_english_07.04.2014.pdf

[24] 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).

2014, for bigger electoral gains in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) the BJP leadership very intelligently opted for the most sacred city of the Hindus, the Varanasi, which is primarily an ancient Hindu holy site and prudently abandoning the much controversial site Ayodhya which has left unheeling bruises in the memory of the people of India. This step yielded the desired benefit for the party and eventually BJP could garner as much as 73 seats in the state of UP following the 2014 general election (http://www.eci.nic.in). Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google plus came to the rescue of the party that made its campaign more approachable and kept the party connected with millions of voters. The extensive use of the social media reaped benefits for the party significantly[25].

BJP made significant inroads in Bihar, Maharashtra besides Uttar Pradesh and retained its outstanding performances in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan (http://www.eci.nic.in). Choosing Modi as the prime ministerial candidate despite of opposition from the old vanguards paid dividends for the party as well. On the contrary, despite of every odd the party has tried to put up a united picture among the upper rung leaders in front of the nation to win their faith and confidence[26]. The party refurbished its line of leadership by discreetly sidelining the leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi, L.K.Advani, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Shourie, Jaswant Singh, Yaswant Sinha and displacing them with a new team of leaders like Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Narendra Modi, Nitin Gadkari.

Modi's electrifying campaign across the nation created a wave of support for the party. Modi enthused energy in the electoral campaign and emerged as the star campaigner of the 2014 general election. The positive image of the prime ministerial candidate worked in favour of the party in whom people saw the leader of the nation who can steer them out of poverty, unemployment and some such other problems. He

[25] *"How BJP's Online Campaign Proved Vital For Success"*, www.ndtv.com, May 20, 2014 (accessed on May 22, 2014 at 02:10 pm).

[26] The futile future of the Bharatiya Janata Party therefore depends in its ability to perform as well as maintain cohesion and cordiality among its cadres. The party's linkages with the militant organisation like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) is still seen with apprehension. On various occasions these organisations have regulated the functioning of the BJP. RSS is a militant Hindu nationalist organisation and VHP, a Hindu revivalist organisation that favours adopting a militant Hindu stand on political and social issues (Malik and Singh, 1994). The RSS under the stewardship of Mohan Bhagat have negotiated to bring unanimity among the rank and file of the BJP leadership to endorse Modi's candidature for Prime Ministership for the 2014 Lok Sabha election. There was considerable opposition from the top leadership of BJP over the possible choice of Modi as the prime ministerial candidate. Sushma Swaraj and L.K Advani have firmly opposed to his candidature. RSS and VHP through their cadre is said to have extensively supported BJP in the ongoing general election campaign and rallies.

in order to effectively identify and connect himself with the common *masses* and create a greater appeal referred to his humble origin of a poor, simple '*chaiwala*'(tea vendor) in his early life who has now dared to challenge the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty[27].

The Reasons for Congress Debacle

The Congress party could not raise hope and sell vision for a better tomorrow among the masses. It appeared as though they were overburdened with their own under performance, inefficiency and stains of corruption. They failed to assess people's mood which yearned for development, performance, enhanced services, good life, strong, decisive leadership and a stable and an 'able' government. On the contrary the Congress during its election campaign got engaged in dirty blame game and had no such significant achievements to bolster up on[28]. Rahul Gandhi lacked the enigma and energy and could not emerge 'one' among the many[29]. Their last minute alliance with Lalu Prasad's RJD was seen with scepticism by the common masses as he himself was behind the bars for his alleged involvement in the fodder scam. With time it was seen the valour and confidence of Congress-led UPA government faded away. Large investment in social sector, a surge in the investment in infrastructure building, rapid increase in rural consumption pattern, increasing per capita income for three times during the last decade, making attempts to bring transparency through Right To Information Act (RTI), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MNREGA) programme, food security bill, pension reform bill, land acquisition bill, direct transfer schemes and some such other legislations were some of the achievements of the Congress-led UPA government over the last ten years. Yet efforts like MNREGA were found to be riddled with ineptitude and corruption. The land acquisition bill[30] that took long span of time to come up was said to be full of flaws and not well enacted as some section of the industry felt that the process of land acquisition from the farmers was long and cumbersome and involved exorbitant

[27] *"Modi-chaiwala to dream merchant"*, The Hindu, May 17, 2014.
[28] Sonal Bhadoria, *"Toffee Model: Rahul Mocks Modi's Gujarat Model"*, www.indiatimes.com, April 14, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 12:05 pm). Also *See "Rahul Gandhi Attacks Narendra Modi in Varanasi"*, www.ndtv.com, May 10, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 12:30 pm)
[29] *"Congress concedes Weak Campaign, Failed Media Strategy"*, www.ndtv.com, May 16, 2014(accessed on May 23, 2014 at 11:15 am).
[30] The Bill will empower the rights of the farmer as according to the Bill it gives farmers' upto four times more of the market rate for land acquired for the industry and infrastructure.

compensations[31]. Its hasty initiatives for foreign direct investment in retail and insurance sector, cutting government expenditure by introducing direct cash transfer scheme (which will indirectly reduce the burden of subsidy) invited criticism for UPA II government.

When the series of corruption scandal jolted the credibility of the pro-people image of the Congress-led UPA government they resorted to strategies like maintaining silence, giving assurances, strong denial of any wrongdoing, sacrificing allies, sending tainted leaders behind the bar etc. They could have won back the confidence of the people of India by cancelling the tainted contracts, denying and protesting in public against the quick bail of the accused, discontinuing alliance with DMK completely rather than waiting until the latter itself deserted it on the issue of the protection of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, refraining from shielding corrupt ministers which could have strengthened the stature of the office of the Prime Minister who is the leader of the nation. Rather than resisting against the corruption crusade (India against Corruption campaign under the stewardship of Anna Hazare) the Congress party should have associated itself actively through its prominent cadres to testify the fact in front of the nation that it too abhors the evil practice of corruption and could have saved the party from the worst ever downslide to a great extent. To make the matter worse for the Congress-led government the Nirbhaya rape case in Delhi (which then had Congress-led state government), the Shakti Mill Mumbai gangrape case (where too Congress-NCP duo ran the state government) corroded the validity of the government. These series of crises ultimately made difficult for the Congress party to win back the faith of the general populace of the nation. The only way the population of a democratic country can show their wrath is through the electoral verdict. The Congress-led UPA government has been severely admonished for its incompetence, inefficiency, non-performance and apathy. Therefore, INC could secure a very dreary tally of seats and scored zero in some ten states such as Rajasthan, Tripura, Gujarat, Goa, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and performed miserably in West Bengal by securing four seats. In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh it could bag just two seats respectively. In Karnataka it could win just 9 seats, in Kerala, it fetched for itself

[31] *"Lok Sabha Passes Land Acquisition Bill"*, www.profit.ndtv.com, August 29, 2013. Also *See "House Panel Decision on Land Bill to hit industry: Adi Godrej"*, www.profit.ndtv.com, May 17, 2012 (accessed on May 22, 2014 at 10:45 am).

some 8 seats and in Assam and Punjab it could garner just 3 seats. In Chattisgarh and Haryana it could secure 1 seat respectively (http://www.ei.nic.in).

Electoral Performance of the BJP in 2014

The good showing of the BJP in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan during the 2013 assembly polls was an early sign of the probability that BJP might leave its imprint in the national election, remained unheeded by the Congress Working Committee. The BJP performed outstandingly in the North and in the West that contributed extensively towards the victory of the party in the 2014 general election in the country. Rajasthan under the leadership of Vasundhara Raje captured all of the 25 Lok Sabha seats. In Gujarat, BJP had a clean sweep over all the 26 Lok Sabha seats. Madhya Pradesh under the leadership of Shivraj Singh Chauhan fetched 27 of the 29 Lok Sabha seats and Chattishgarh too voted in favour of the right wing party by bestowing it with 10 out of the 11 Lok Sabha seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

BJP made inroads in the North–East by occupying one seat in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam as well by bagging 7 seats thereby surpassing INC and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) (http://www.eci.nic.in). Although in the last assembly election BJP was drubbed by INC in Karnataka but the trend got reversed when it surpassed all the other parties by occupying 17 of the 28 Lok Sabha seats and this contributed considerably towards the overall tally of seats for the party (http://www.eci.nic.in). Uttarakhand contributed all its 5 Lok Sabha seats in the share of BJP's total tally of seat. In Bihar too BJP had put up an outstanding performance by fetching for itself 22 of the 40 Lok Sabha seats by surpassing INC, Janata Dal-United (JD-U) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) (http://www.eci.nic.in). The votes of the Yadavs, OBC and Dalits as well has drifted towards BJP due to 'NaMo' effect that claims to provide development and upliftment to all irrespective of caste, community, creed, religion through his motto '*sabka saath, sabka vikas'* (collective effort inclusive development). Delhi after its disappointment with INC and Aam Admi Party (AAP) resorted to BJP by conferring it with all the 7 Lok Sabha seats. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP gave its hallmark performance by bagging 71 seats out of the 80 Lok Sabha seats and this led to the rise in the share of the seat for the party that contributed significantly towards its success (http://www.eci.nic.in). The magnificent

electoral campaign designed by Amit Shah, general secretary of the BJP, paid manifold. Appealing to vote for the party from the Jats to take revenge from the Muslims for the Muzaffarnagar riot in U.P led to consolidation of OBC vote behind the party that triggered its total number of seats[32]. Varanasi resonated with slogans like '*Har Har Modi'* whereby efforts were made to equate Modi with Lord Shiva, the Hindu mythological god, so as to consolidate the votes of the Hindus and the Brahmins for the party. BJP made its presence felt in West Bengal and Punjab as well by winning 2 seats respectively. In Maharashtra, it routed out Congress-NCP duo by winning 23 seats along with 18 seats grabbed by Shiv Sena, its long time ally in the state. In Odisha, despite of any strong presence in the state BJP could manage to win 1 seat. Himachal Pradesh bestowed its entire 4 seats in the favour of BJP. The 'NaMo wave' also swept Haryana where it had secured 7 seats in comparison to 1 seat of INC. Even in Jammu and Kashmir, BJP could leave its imprint and could bag 3 seats whereas Nationalist Conference drew a blank (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The Translation of *aspirations* into Party System

However, when all the states have thrown aside regional considerations and voted in favour of Brand Modi and his much hyped and celebrated 'Gujarat model', four states remained an aberration namely, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha and Tripura. This election yielded results for those who performed and was prepared for delivering governance and development. Jayalalitha was paid off for her pro-people and development oriented policies such as providing drought relief to the farmers, rice at Rs. 2 per kg, distributing mixer and grinder and electric fan free of cost, ensuring free education along with laptop, books, bicycles, school bags to the students free of cost, etc (www.aiadmkallindia.org). All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham (AIADMK) gave a laudable performance in the state of Tamil Nadu and bagged 37 Lok Sabha seats polling 3.3 percent of votes eliminating its prime opponent Dradiva Munnetra Kazhagham (DMK) which drew a blank probably for its linkages with the 2G spectrum scam (http://www.eci.nic.in). Similarly, Naveen Patnaik of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Orissa too kept his record by bagging 20 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats

[32] Communal passions were flared by some BJP leaders for their own electoral gains during the mahapanchayat that was held after the culmination of the Muzaffarnagar riots during September, 2013 to resolve the conflict between the Jats and the Muslims.

poling 1.7 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Patnaik is credited with efficiency and administrative efficacy and these has been considered as some of the prime reason for his excellent performance. His populist measures like subsidized rice for Rs. 1 per kg, old age pension and social security schemes, distribution of free umbrella, laptop, clothing and school uniforms to the destitute, providing houses to homeless families not included in Below Poverty Line (BPL) list and bicycles to girl students paid profusely for the party (www.bijujanatadal.net). West Bengal routed out INC and Left and maintained its adherence to Trinamool Congress. Despite of some serious challenges confronting the pro- people image of the party such as Sharada chit fund scam that involved some of its own MLAs, the haunting Park Street rape case and the subsequent forced transfer issue of Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Damini Sen, the Kamduni rape case where the family members of the victim alleged involvement of some Trinamool leaders in the incident of rape the party was still able to withhold its performance and in fact improved its number of seats from 19 to 34 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats polling 3.8 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). Mamata Banerji kept her voters allured with her simplicity and catchy phrases, resorted to popular strategies such as providing financial assistance to the youth through schemes like *yuvasree* and aided girl child through schemes like *kanyasree* which assured Rs.500 per year for schooling and transferred Rs. 25000 to the family bank account when a girl turns 18, besides removing entry taxes on goods. Although Left has performed abysmally poor in the state of West Bengal but could retain its performance only in Tripura where the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M) won both the seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The popularity of Manik Sarkar, the Chief Minister of Tripura, and his political acumen are some of the most significant factors that have enabled CPI (M) to retain its last bastion. Apart from this, attaining self-sufficiency in food, generating employment through several projects, ability to restore and maintain peace and harmony among the tribal indigenous population and the Bengali settlers, providing access to safe drinking water and provision of 35 kg of rice at Rs. 2 per kg for BPL families are some of the factors that contributed towards its consolidation in the state and its performance in the Lok Sabha polls (http://www.cpim.org/documents-and-booklets[33]). Left as of now has slipped into oblivion. It stands almost eradicated In West Bengal. When it parted ways with UPA-

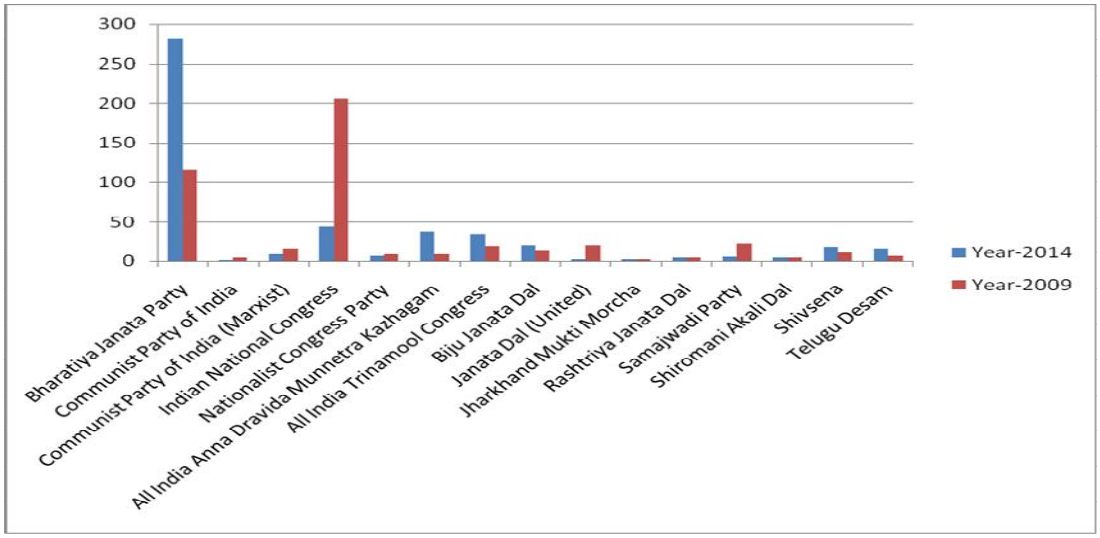
[33] Also *See* http://www.cpim.org/press-briefing.

I in 2009 over the nuclear deal in the name of ideology the general populace was unable to grasp their intellectual projections. The Left leadership stands in disarray and failed to adapt itself to the changing social and political dynamics, lacks the organisational strength which was earlier its hallmark. It lacks its presence among the backward classes. The leadership needs to be revamped, enthused with energy, zeal to work and broader vision for a nation. Moreover, it always lacked an impressive national appeal. It was mostly restricted to Kerala, West Bengal where it ruled for more than three decade and in Tripura where it still maintains its foothold. Kerala still shuffles between Left Democratic Front (LDF) and Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

The smaller parties that had played bigger roles have now with the 2014 general election been cut to size. Parties like Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janata Dal (United) who have earlier played burgeoning influence in Indian politics since the late 1980s have suffered a nose dive with the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. BSP, a significant regional player representing the Dalits drew a blank whereas SP that is now in possession of the state mantle in Uttar Pradesh could bag just 5 seats polling 3.4 percent of votes (http://www.eci.nic.in). SP was accused of minority appeasement by its own traditional voters and this lead to the swinging away of the Yadav, Jats and OBC votes from the party. BJP by resorting to caste-based mobilization during the electoral campaign, despite being traditionally an anti-Dalit and anti-Muslim party, have cut into the share of votes of the parties representing these sections of the society. Communal polarization following the Muzaffarnagar riots in Western Uttar Pradesh between the Jats (who recently have been conferred with the category of OBC) and the Muslims went against the electoral fortune of Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Ajit Singh and Bahujan Samaj Party as well. The rise of BJP proved detrimental for popular regional players like RJD and Janata Dal (United) as well. Their seat tally has reduced drastically to 4 and 2 respectively (http://www.eci.nic.in). However, regional parties like Telegu Desam Party (TDP), Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of Ramvilas Paswan, Akali Dal in Punjab and Shiv Sena (SS) gained immensely in the 2014 lok sabha election by forging their opportunistic alliance with BJP. New entrant Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS), a state based party, headed by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) too swept the Lok sabha and assembly election with thumping number of seats. TRS

bagged 11 of the 17 Lok Sabha seats polling 1.2 percent of votes and surpassed Congress, YSR Congress, TDP-BJP combine in the state assembly election by capturing 63 seats in the 119 member Telangana assembly (http://www.eci.nic.in). The victory for TRS was obvious as its leader was the architect of the 29th state that took birth after a relentless struggle for statehood. His arduous campaign and motivating speeches enchanted voters in its favour. Moreover, the victory was the reward for his struggle. This election has pruned most of the regional parties but the time to write an obituary has not yet come. It would be premature to conclude that regional satraps have lost their essence and relevance in the Indian politics, more particularly at the central level or that 'issue' based politics have replaced or sidelined identity-based politics in such a heterogeneous society.

Comparative performance of Political Parties during Lok Sabha election 2009 and 2014



Source: Figures available from Election Commission of India website http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/statistical_report.aspx and http://eciresults.nic.in/

Another new entrant, the Aam Admi Party (AAP) too gave a dismal performance in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Following these cases of corruption, India witnessed a crusade against corruption under the banner of 'India Against Corruption' movement (which has been compared with the Jaya Prakash Narayan movement of 1974) for a Jan Lokpal Bill to cleanse the system of improper practices. Eventually the party emanating from the corruption crusade namely the Aam Admi Party (AAP) under the

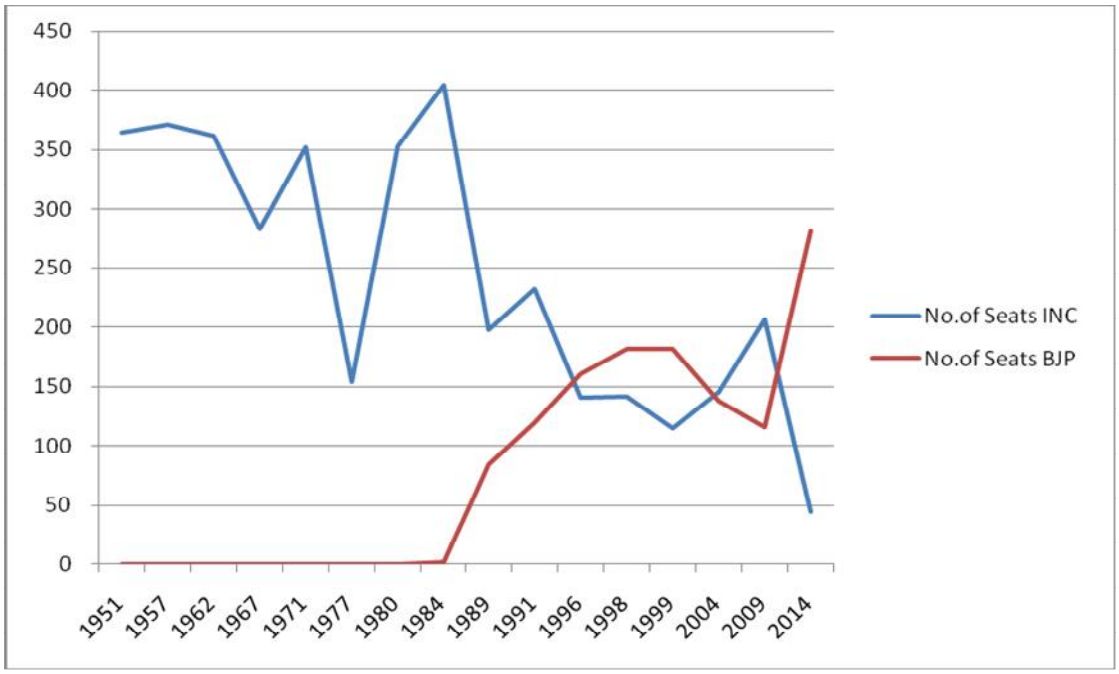
stewardship of Arvind Kejriwal, a civil society activist, was expected to play a decisive role in the 2014 election. But its 49 days tenure as a state ruler which failed to deliver as promised led to erosion of its charisma that it had spelt over the people of India with its crusade faded away. People failed to repose their faith in it as it clearly displayed its administrative ignorance and ineptitudeness while in power heading the Delhi state government. Kejriwal played an opportunistic role by forming a party thereby giving manifestation to his own political aspirations under the veil of corruption crusader. AAP is a political novice with no significant experience of running a government and this acted as a deterrent towards its electoral performance. Although it had contested 443 seats from all over the country but could win just 4 seats in Punjab only (http://www.eci.nic.in).

The 2014 Lok Sabha Election and the Realigned Indian Party System

With the 16th Lok Sabha election the Indian party system has also witnessed sea changes. The Indian party system as it exhibits is multiparty in nature since its origin, although it keeps reconfiguring structurally with every election. The Indian party system from a competitive multi-party system with Congress predominance as the majority party till 1967 that remained fragmented as well as binodal since 1967 has presently once again transformed into a competitive multi-party system with Bharatiya Janata Party's predominance as the 'majority party'[34] as it had secured 282 seats polling 20.58 percent of votes and 31.34 percent of seats (http://www.eci.nic.in).

[34] A majority party is one which by itself possesses more than half of the parliamentary seats. However, a dominant party is one that holds the majority over a long period of political development. *See* Maurice Duverger, "*Political Parties: Their organisation and Activity In Modern states"*, 1955, pp.307-309.

Comparative Performance of INC and BJP since 1951-2014



Source: Figures available from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation website http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/SYB2014/ch43.html

The trend of bipolarization, fragmentation and coalition politics has suffered a setback. Although these trends have not evaporated completely. The party system still remains bipolarized with Congress and other parties at the other pole trying to revamp them. The Indian party system has always remained in a state of flux therefore the equation might get reversed at any course of time. The Indian party system still presents a messy picture as in many states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Sikkim voted for their respective state-based parties and Tripura voted for CPI(M) thereby keeping the party system fragmented in nature. States likeTelangana, Seemandhra, Odisha, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh that went to assembly polls subsequently voted for non- BJP parties such as TRS, TDP, BJD, SDF respectively retaining the fragmented nature of the party system. Arunachal Pradesh too voted for a non-BJP alternative. Congress had a clean sweep in the state by securing 39 seats of the 60 assembly berths. BJP won just 5 seats and People's Party of Arunachal has secured a lone seats. Similarly, in Odisha BJD stormed back to power by capturing 117 seats in the 147 member assembly. In the Seemandhra assembly election TDP-BJP combine secured 106 seats out of the 175 assembly seats. In Sikkim, Sikkim

Democratic Front (SDF) emerged victorious by winning 22 seats of the 32 assembly seats (http://www.eci.nic.in). Some stability, coherence and uniformity has been restored at the central level only as the mandate went in favour of a party that had crossed the half-way mark all by itself which breaks the spell of coalition government. BJP came back to power at the centre after more than a decade. It is the first party since 1984 to get a majority on its own at the union level as since 1989 coalition form of government had become the order of the day. Since 1989 not a single political party was able to secure absolute majority on its own at the union level. Moreover, it is credited to be the first non-Congress party to have own an absolute majority on its own. The verdict restored some essence to the lost relevance of the form of Parliamentary Democracy and also strengthened the office of the Prime Minister as the overwhelming role of the small parties was reduced as the ruling party had absolute majority on its own.

Conclusions

The crux of the 2004, 2009 and 2014 Lok Sabha election has been vote for 'change' and 'comprehensive development'. The significant determining factor of the voting pattern has been people's apathy towards the underperformance of the government in power, disparity between proclamations and action, evil practice of corruption. They want the public finance to be used for enhanced public services. The nation with mostly young population now wants to shed off the status of a developing nation and get elevated to the status of being "developed". Hence, it is time for Modi-led BJP government to translate words into deeds and deliver perform and resort to dedicated and sincere implementation of its programmes and policies. The Modi-led Government has to now create policies that would respond to people expectations and translate promises into actions. The Central Government being now free from continuous bargaining, negotiations and messy compromises should work ardently and with great determination to resolve some of the grave problems like – corruption in the administration, financial lay off, fiscal deficits, unemployment, poverty, accelerating agricultural growth, expanding primary education, reducing gap between the rich and the poor, minimize threats to climate change, take efforts to control pollution, environmental hazards, terrorism and insurgencies, the Naxalite challenge

and others threats to internal and external security, etc. to cement its credibility so as to retain its ruling position in the country. Only its ability to adhere to the development strategies and its sincere implementation will help it to survive itself in this multi-party competitive structure. What a party in power is achieving will actually count at the end of the day.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

No modern political system, particularly no democratic political system that exist are known to have function without political parties that together go on to form a party system. A party system can said to be a constellation of numerous political parties that yield political power from time to time and share intricate inter-relationships among themselves over sharing of power. Political groups or parties are said to have remained engaged in the struggle to come to power. No free and large countries have been without them (political parties).

A similar phenomenon has been witnessed by India as well. Political parties have undoubtedly played a decisive role in the process of democratization. It will be difficult to conceive of India's democratic system and its journey without mentioning about the crucial role played by the various political parties. India's population exhibited a homogeneous character and comprised of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christains, Sikhs and Jains. Naturally ever since the pre-independence period (since the 19the century) the Indian political system has been marked by the presence of multiple parties that existed to speak for these varied communities. Similarly, parties representing various sections and class also existed in the political system. Amongst these groups and parties the Indian National Congress (INC) was the strongest and the most representative. India has been so representative because it was a colonized country and was under the repressive rule of the British Empire which was making India hollow from within. Hence, a nationalistic trend emerged in India during the pre-colonial days in the urge for right for self-determination. The greatest opponent of British Imperialism was the Indian National Congress (INC) which was then the most organised medium to express the dissidents of the pre-independent Indian's. Various socio-religious reform movements, political protests, spread of western liberal ideas awakened mass consciousness of the people. Hence the people under the committed leadership waged a struggle against the exploitative British regime. It heralded a struggle for power between the British imperial authority and the Indians and between the Hindus and the Muslims over the rate and method of transfer of power from

British to the Indians. With this process the journey of the Indian party system originated. In the post-independence era, British Imperial authority and Muslim League was replaced by numerous other political parties that strove hard to acquire power and form the government.

Party system is an indispensable component of democratic politics. The Indian Party system has witnessed dramatic changes since independence. It has produced surprising results with its vast menu of choices. It has facilitated realignment in power structure and the basic dynamics of the society. Hence as stated in the beginning of the work through the work we have made an attempt to seek answers to certain questions which are as follows: 1.What are the central features of the Indian party system since 1989? 2. What are the various causes that have contributed to the changes in the nature of the Indian Party System in the recent period? How have the decline of the Indian National Congress, the growth of the BJP and the expansion of the Regional parties bring transformation in the Indian Party system? 3. What are the central features of some of the selected state party systems that have evolved since 1989? What are the factors that have contributed to the growth of the various state party systems in different regions of the country? 4. Is there any similarity between the state party systems and the National party system? If not what are the factors that have contributed towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and state level? 5. What changes are likely to take place in the Indian Party System and the state party systems in the near future?

We have noted that the Indian Party system has traversed a long journey from a Competitive Multi-Party System with Congress predominance as a majority party to a Competitive Multi-Party System which remained Fragmented and Binodal since 1967 followed by a Partial Restoration of Congress Party as the majority party in a fragmented multi-party system from 1980 till 1989. However, the Congress Party was not able to retain its regained status in the Indian Party System. The inability of the Rajiv Gandhi government (1984-1989) to live up to the expectations of the Indian masses sealed the fate of the party with the ninth general election and a trend of coalition era cemented its base since 1989. Rajiv Gandhi was politically a novice and could not prove his political acumen. His name got attached with the famous Bofors scandal. This led to the loss of credibility (besides numerous other significant factors,

like the Shah Bano case, the minority appeasement, etc.) of the Rajiv Gandhi led Congress (I) party in the eyes of the common people. Ultimately, the people of India gave its verdict again for a non-Congress party headed by V.P. Singh. It was formed mainly on the plank to oppose the corrupt Congress (I) government. Since then series of collapse/downfall of non-Congress government occurred leading to acute instability of the Indian Party System. As none could evolve as the able government and an alternative to Congress (I) hence to arrest this problem of instability the people again gave their verdict for the Congress (I). It came back to power in 1991 under the leadership of P.V. Narashima Rao. The 1991 Congress-led coalition government had completed its tenure but still the party could not regain its pro-people image. It could not impress the masses about its sincerity (to serve the interest of the common masses). It ultimately experienced one of its most serious debacles in 1996 when the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as an alternative to Congress (I). Hence, the Indian Party System witnessed a significant reconfiguration when the Hindu nationalist party came to power at the union level and once again relegated Congress (I) to the position of an opposition party.

BJP, the successor of BJS, since its inception in 1980 has improved electorally. It was not able to emerge as a viable and permanent alternative. Its fanatic fundamentalist predispositions, pro-rich policies, inability to adhere to poll promises, frequent involvement with massive corruption charges enabled Congress (I) to oust it from power with the 2004 general election. The 2004 general election marked the 'rejuvenation' of Congress (I). Mrs. Sonia Gandhi had launched the 'Jan Sampark' programme (a populist initiative) to establish direct contact with the masses apart from various other populist measures which included apologetic politics, pro-people policies, extensive campaigning, rallies, brain storming sessions, selling of hopes and aspirations for a better tomorrow through committed and energized leadership, socio-economic programmes, etc. All these measures reaped benefits only in the 2004 Lok Sabha election when the INC saw a revival as the ruling party by defeating the BJP-led NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government. The 2009 Lok Sabha election marked its 'resurgence' in a major way. It had performed well and crossed the 200 mark on its own. BJP-led NDA stood distant second. Even in the state assembly polls held during 2009 the Congress party had revived in almost all the states. The achievements of the 2004 Congress-led UPA (United Progressive Alliance)

government had been significant and visible. Hence the people of India bestowed them with a chance to rule for the second consecutive term. The party had done away with its inhibitions and reservations with the coalition politics and with the Pachmari session it had gracefully accepted it. The party had been the largest partner to the United Progressive Alliance. With 2009 Lok Sabha election the Congress-led UPA government tasted a comprehensive victory and played an assertive and dominating role as the coalition maker. The perfect blending between electoral promises and performance has actually facilitated in the resurgence of the Congress (I) party.

However, the Congress Party was not able to withhold its position in the Indian party system. With the 2014 general election the Indian party system witnessed one of the thundering developments when it placed BJP as the 'majority party' in the Indian party system. The claims to provide development and upliftment to all irrespective of caste, community, creed, religion, etc. through the motto '*sabka saath,sabka vikas'* (collective effort inclusive development), the much-hyped Gujarat model of development and the assurance of good days lying (*aache din aane wale hain*) ahead if Narendra Modi-led NDA government voted to power caught the fancies of the people .

Despite of the laudable performance of the BJP in the 2014 election when it fetched for itself absolute majority of seats in the Lok Sabha polls the Indian Party System could not do away with its fragmented character which has taken its roots most particularly since 1967. As because many of the states of the Indian Union like Telangana, Seemandhra, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Puduchery, Bihar,West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh that went to assembly polls subsequently, voted for non-BJP parties such as TRS, TDP, BJD, SDF, AIADMK, Congress-DMK alliance, JD(U)-RJD alliance andTrinamool Congress respectively retaining the fragmented nature of the party system. Although the early signs of fragmentation of the Indian Party System was visible from 1957 when Kerala voted in favour of a Communist-led government. State-specific issues like the issue of political succession, conflict over political opportunities, rising aspirations of political leaders for sweeping powers were some of the initial reasons that led to the dwindling of the undisputed status of the Congress Party over the Indian party and the political system. Hence, the party system became incohesive in nature and lost its uniformity permanently since 1967

and henceforth remained bifurcated into two levels. Some coherence and uniformity was visible only till the 1962 general election and with the subsequent assembly polls. However, the Congress Party could never establish itself as the dominant party[1] because with every Lok Sabha polls its number of seats and vote shares has fluctuated[2]. Infact with the 1967 Lok Sabha polls its tally of seats dropped to 283 and it has never secured more than 50 percent of votes. During the period from 1952 till 1971 when the Congress Party had enjoyed the status of 'Majority Party'by bagging more than half of the Parliamentary votes, few states had voted in aberration. In Travancore-Cochin and Madras, Congress has failed to acquire absolute majority and had formed government in coalition. In Madras, Congress allied with CPI with the 1952 assembly polls. In Kerala in 1957 CPI-led coalition government came to power. Due to internal dissensions and ideological incongruence it collapsed and the state came under the Presidential rule. Following this the Congress Party could come to power in the state.

In a competitive multi-party system, INC could keep itself ahead of other parties for two decades only because the Indian Party System could not produce any potential alternative for the electorates to vote for. Hence, INC remained as the natural choice of the people. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) could never increase its electoral prospect in the country. Its electoral performance has never been brilliant. The states too lacked any potential alternative to INC till 1967. However, since the late sixties in lot many states INC failed to acquire absolute majority on its own and non-Congress coalition governments under the banner of SVD government came to power in these states. The Congress had an excellent organisational strength with a soaring membership since the pre-independence period. This trend continued even after independence for a considerable span of time. The Indian Party system lacked a very strong opposition as

[1]A "*majority party*" is one which by itself possesses more than half of the parliamentary seats. However, a dominant party is one that holds the majority over a long period of political development. *See* Maurice Duverger, "*Political Parties: Their organisation and Activity In Modern states"*, 1955, pp.307-309.

[2] In 1951 Congress secured 364 seats, in 1957 it bagged 371 seats, in 1962 it won 361 seats, it could win 283 seats with the 1967 LokSabha polls, in 1971 general election it bagged 352 seats and in 1977 it secured its lowest tally of seats with 154 seats since independence (http://www.eci.nic.in). Hence till 1971 (for two decades in the absence of any prime alternative) Congress could capture more than half of the Parliamentary seats in a competitive multi-party system. Only in 1977 when the opposition got united and Congress could no longer mediate dissidence due to loss of internal democracy and excessive authoritarian manner of functioning of Mrs. Indira Gandhi then INC was reduced to the position of an opposition party in the Indian party system at the national level as well as in many states such as UP, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, etc.

well. The stature of the INC as an 'umbrella party' also enabled it to emerge as the majority party in the competitive multi-party system where other parties existed but they played a very disenchanted role in the Indian party system. Not until 1967 when opposition acquired a robust role in the Indian Party System.

The heterogeneous and diversified nature of the Indian society also facilitated the growth of a bifurcated and hence a fragmented party system. With each passing years the people (voter's) of the country became more vocal and conscious and yearned for a better tomorrow. Hence they ventured into looking for alternatives. With circulation of new political elites and with diminishing returns from Congress as a party and as a government people sought for alternatives. Hence, people voted for different political affiliations and this trend made the fragmented nature of the Indian Party System more defined. Hence, the Indian Party System saw the rise of Regional satraps riding on the plank of region-specific grievances and aspirations. Since the late sixties, the Indian Party System has witnessed reconfiguration by repetitive attempts by political novices such as Congress (O), Janata Party (JP), Janata Dal (JD), Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP), Bharatiya Kranti Dal(BKD), Bharatiya Lok Dal(BLD), Jan Morcha (JM), Dravida Munnetra Kahagam (DMK), Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janatal Dal(United) (JDU), Assam Gana Parishad (AGP), Shiv Sena (SS), Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM),Telugu Desam Party(TDP), Akali Dal (AD) to emerge as alternative at the both the national and state level. These political parties have time and again formed governments in the states by replacing Congress from power and have also acted as coalition partners at the union level. The Shiv Sena with its 'son of soil' ideology in coalition with BJP could replace Congress from power in the state of Maharashtra which had been since independence been a strong bastion of the Congress party. The state of Maharashtra had withstood the anti-Congress tide of 1967 and 1989. Similarly parties like AIADMK and TMC have facilitated the downfall of 1996 BJP-led coalition government at the centre.

During the era of anti-Congressism in the sixties, Congress failed to secure the majority of seats in many states and non-Congress coalition government under the banner of the Samyukt Vidhayak Dal (SVD) government came to power in as many as nine states such as Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala. Internal infighting over political opportunities,

defection, primordial loyalties and administrative inefficiency by the ruling Congress government were some of the immediate reasons in these state that led to bifurcation of the Indian party system and rise of multiple state party systems. However, what we notice is that in present times elections are fought and won on the plank of four Ps namely, **Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivity**, where populist policies promises to satisfy the pangs of hunger for comprehensive development and vigorous election campaign by a popular leader raises people's hopes and aspirations to achieve development for the electorates yearning always for a better tomorrow. However, survival and continuity of the popular government depends on the symmetry between 'proclamations' and 'performance'. The state party systems as well are largely guided by these parameters. Hence not mere legacy or lip services counts but it is the ability to create a balance between rhetoric, intent and action that matters in the Indian Party System at both the national and state level. The ascendance of the BJP as the majority party at the national level is largely the outcome of the effort by the party to religiously adhere to the above mentioned parameters (during its election campaign for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and subsequent assembly elections). However, BJP can retain its newly acquired status of the 'majority party' in a competitive multi-party system only if it is able to cement its credibility through its diligent performance, probity and dedicated and sincere implementation of the poll promises. Infact, in the recent years with the assembly polls in the states like UP, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala have voted in the line of the above mentioned parameters of performance, populism, popularity and positivity. As long the respective parties in power in the states are able to adhere to these parameters religiously they will enjoy the support of the people and will not be voted out of power.

Hence, describing the Indian Party System as a Congress System was nothing short of an exaggeration and a hyped myth. Indian Party System has since 1957 reflected the diversified nature of the Indian society by producing varied state party systems and assorted composition of the central government with each passing years as the democratic ethos of the Indian electorates got more matured. The party system of the country reflects the expectations of the Indian electorates from the serving government and the failure and success of a political party in power. The Downfall of the Congress Party as the majority party, rise of non-Congress alternatives at the

national level since 1977 and at the state level from as early as 1957 testifies to the fact.

Presently (with the Lok sabha election held in 2014) the Indian Party system still stands fragmented into two levels. At the national level the Indian Party system has acquired a competitive multi-party system with Bharatiya Janata Party's predominance as the 'majority party' since the 16th Lok Sabha election held in 2014. The trend of bipolarization, fragmentation and coalition politics have not evaporated completely at the state level.The party system still remains bipolarized with Congress and other parties at the other pole trying to revamp them both at the national level. Infact, with many of the recent assembly elections lot many of the states like Bihar, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Puducherry, Sikkim, Odisha, etc. voted for non-BJP alternatives which testifies to the fact that Indian party system still stands bifurcated and fragmented in nature. People pass their verdict depending upon the state-based needs as well as based on the parameters like populism, popularity, performance and positivity. Indian party system not only presents a messy picture for itself but it has a history of producing surprising electoral verdicts. Hence any sea changes, reconfiguration and realignments in the near future within the party system at both the national and state levels cannot be brushed out.

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Can a Leopard Change its Spots?

MOULI DEY

Although the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may appear to be 'accomodative' in rhetoric, in reality and action it still remains communal. It had failed to shed off its orthodox Hindu fundamentalist ideas. Several instances during the campaign for the Lok Sabha elections 2014 bear testimony. The gesture of tolerance towards the Muslims lacks credibility. The manifesto of the BJP still echoes the desire of the party to walk on the line of *mandir–masjid* politics when it expresses its desire to construct the Ram temple in the disputed site of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The party that is vowing in the name of 'development' and 'good governanace' has nothing to offer with regard to Muslim empowerment. Neither does the manifesto clearly spell out how the party seeks to amelio-rate the socio-economic conditions of the Muslim community.

On the contrary, the Minority Affairs Minister, Najma Heptulla, has shown her reservation in considering the Muslims as a minority, although the Minority Affairs Ministry was established in 2006 to look into the social, economic and educational conditions of the Muslims in India in accordance with the recommendations of the Sachar Committee report. According to her, Muslims are too large in numbers to call themselves a minority and it is the Parsis who need special attention for they are a 'miniscule minority'. She did not appear much encouraging about religion-based reservations in matters of employment for the Muslims too as she termed it as unconstitutional. Heptulla even seemed disinterested in continuing and forging ahead with the Prime Minister's 15-point programme for the welfare of the minorities.

The party still remains steeped in the ideology of *Hindutva* and Hindu nationalism. This was evident in its series of inflammatory and provocative hate speeches given during the campaign for the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections 2014. Amit Shah, the BJP General Secretary (who was entrusted with the task of managing the election campaign in the State of Uttar Pradesh), for instance, was accused of polarising the atmosphere in the State when he in a rally appealed for votes for the party from the Jats in order to take revenge on the 'Muslims' for the Muzaffarnagar riots. In September 2013 a conflict had broken out between the Jats and Muslims in Muzaffarnagar. It has also been reported that some of the leaders from the BJP, apart from other political parties, allegedly played a role in inciting the Hindus to resort to violence for taking revenge on the Muslims. This testified to the antipathy of the party towards the Muslim community thereby subtly establishing its fondness for fanatic fundamentalist ideas that threatenes to destabilise the harmony and fraternity of a country which upholds secularism, unity, integrity and fraternity.

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♦

In another instance, one of its cadres Giriraj Singh, a BJP candidate for the Lok Sabha from Nawada, in an election rally in Deoghar, Jharkhand, had threatened that whosoever dared to oppose the BJP's nominated prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, would be deported to Pakistan. This controversial statement exposed the fact that the party that promises to seek development, modernity, peace, prosperity, unity, integrity was still not able to eschew its anti-Muslim ideology and had failed to reorient and adapt to the present age that is marked by technological advances. Similarly, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader, Pravin Togadia, had also triggered a sense of insecurity and fear among the Muslims when he, during the election campaign in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, had warned the Muslims that they should not dare to buy property in Hindu majority areas. This statement was a direct attack on the secular ethos of a heterogeneous country like India which cherishes the concept of unity in diversity. This was decried by the Aam Aadmi Party but defended by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Ram Madhav and BJP spokeperson Prakash Javadekar. This also brought into focus the BJP's linkages with the RSS, a militant Hindu nationalist organisation, and VHP, a Hindu revivalist organisation that favours adopting a militant

Hindu stand on political and social issues. (Malik and Singh,1994) Moreover, it was the RSS under the stewardship of Mohan Bhagat that was said to have toiled hard to bring unanimity among the rank-and-file of the BJP leadership to endorse Modi's candidature for prime ministership in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The RSS and VHP were backing the BJP in the recently concluded general elections. To make things worse, another leader of the Shiv Sena, a long-time and close ally of the BJP, Ramdas Kadam, while sharing the stage with Narendra Modi in Maharashtra during the election campaign, had threatened to take revenge over the Muslims for the 2012 Azad Maidan attack. He had also vociferously stated that Modi will destroy Pakistan within six months of assuming power at the Centre. In an election rally in Bengal Modi had threatened to deport only the illegal Muslim Bangladeshi immigrants once he come to power. All these instances unmask the real face of the BJP: it still remains aggressively communal in its ideology and manoeuvres and this is enough to petrify people.

The BJP still retains its hardline Hindu credentials. During the 1980s its communal agenda centred around issues like the Babri mosque, construction of the Ram temple in the city of Ayodhya. Earlier it mobilised Hindu voters through the anti-cow slaughter movement during the 1966-67 and demonstration in front of Parliament to pass the law for prohibiting the practice. In the 2014 electoral campaign, apart from issues like develpoment, eradication of corruption, good governance, mobilisation in the name of 'identity' was also evident as the BJP had chosen the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the most religiously significant Hindu city on the banks of the sacred Ganga as its citadel. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous State that sends eighty Members of Parliament to the Lok Sabha. Since the BJP lacked much presence in the North-East and down south, therefore winning the maximum number of seats from the most populous Hindi heartland State (that has the maximum Hindu population) became imperative for the party to capture power at the Centre.[1] Therefore, to rekindle the feeling of 'being Hindu' and to popularise Modi for bigger electoral gains in the State of Uttar Pradesh the BJP leadership very intelligently opted for the most sacred city of the Hindus, the Varanasi, which is primarily an ancient Hindu holy site. This would compel the Muslim population to view the ruling pary's intention of being 'accomodative' in nature with suspicion and fear about the ulterior BJP motive of communal polarisation.

The BJP, with all its pro-Hindu and anti-minority stances, will only jeopardise its political position in the electoral map of the country and may find itself deserted by the disadvantageous sections of the society. Although the BJP has promised a strong, decisive leadership and high economic growth, it is still oscillating between the *Hindutva* ideology and a modern vision for itself and the nation. The political success of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Modi in the coming days depends largely in their ability to deliver as promised. ■

ENDNOTE

1. Census 2001 data on population by religious communities. Out of 166197921 people from all religious communities in UP, 133979263 Hindus resided in Uttar Pradesh in comparison with 30740158 Muslims. (NSSO National Data Bank For Socio-Religious Categories).

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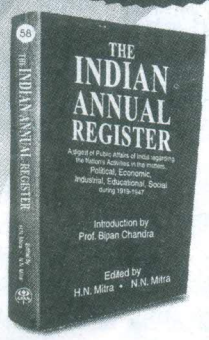
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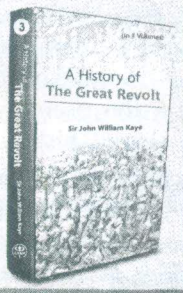
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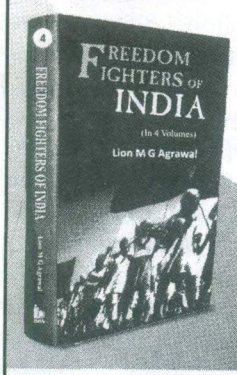
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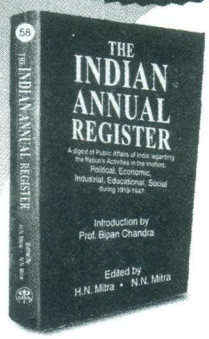
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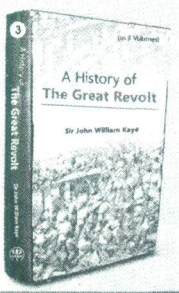
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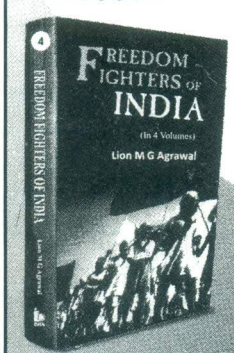


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Too many as Primus Inter Pares

MOULI DEY

The following piece was written and sent to us sometime ago but could not be used earlier due to unavoidable reasons. However, despite some of the contents of the article being dated, the piece still retains its validity in essence; it is thus being used here.

Who should rule the country following the 2014 Lok Sabha elections? This is a question which might crop up in the mind of any individual citizen of India eligible to exercise the right of universal adult suffrage. Indian politics has become so much complicated that nothing is placid, whether it is the electoral verdict or it is the type of party system or it is the leadership. There are numerous contenders for power but there exist ambiguity over the prime ministerial candidate. The final verdict will obviously be 'of the people' but it can be well speculated that the verdict will be fragmented with no one having an absolute majority because the party system of India, which is not at all uniform in nature, offers to its voters a menu of multiple choices. The contest for the 2014 elections is between many options such as the veteran Congress, the alternative to the Congress, that is, the BJP, the Left Front, the probable, yet-to-materialise Third Front consisting of Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee and Naveen Patnaik, and the Front led by Mayawati and others. The regional satraps are now even more keen about having a bigger role for themselves at the national level. In fact, most of these regional level leaders are aspiring candidates for the august post of the Prime Minister.

The Bharatiya Janata Party had a nosedive in the previous 2009 general elections and is therefore seen to have already geared themselves with the preparations for the 2014 elections. It is being said that the party feels that it lost the 2009 elections (and earlier the 2004 general elections) because of its fanatic propagation of the ideology of *Hindutva* which did not catch the fancies of the people who had been witness to the dreadful post-Godhra pogrom of 2002 in Gujarat following the Babri Masjid demolition by the *kar sevaks* who were later on burnt alive in the Sabarmati Express as a mark of revenge.

The author is pursuing her Ph.D in the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal.

Presently the Hindu-Muslim and Mandir-Masjid issues have taken a back stage. As a result the party now projects itself as one which favours "development" and is trying to allure the citizens of the country with the Gujarat model of development[1] as its trump card for the 2014 election campaign. Hence Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister of Gujarat for three consecutive terms, has been appointed by the party High Command as the BJP's Campaign Committee chief for the 2014 elections so that he can catch the fancies of the present-age generation that is attracted to the neo-liberal technological advances. Thus it has been speculated that if the communal image of Modi has not stopped him for winning Assembly elections for three consecutive terms in Gujarat, then it will not stop him from performing outstandingly in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. If he wins he will become the Prime Minister without being a prime ministerial candidate. The BJP is yet to formally declare its prime ministerial candidate from its many options like Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley, L.K Advani. Although the projection of Modi as the prime ministerial candidate has been claimed by some sections of the party as a media hype.

♦

So it is pretty well discernible that the party is suffering from a leadership vacuum since the withdrawl of Atal Behari Vajpayee at the national level. Hence if a party is not clear about its leadership, how will it steer the country through thick and thin if it emerges victorious after the 2014 elections? Moreover, there are many contenders from within the party for the post. It's significant ally, the JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar, is said to be one of the most aspiring contenders for the post. He is said to have publicly shown his despise for Modi as the prime ministerial candidate and has in fact already snapped the party's ties with the BJP

over the issue. Even the Shiv Sena, its long time ally, too has serious reservations about Modi. There is also considerable opposition from the top leadership of the BJP over the possible choice of Modi as the prime ministerial candidate. Sushma Swaraj and L.K Advani have firmly opposed his candidature. So the internal squabbles are so intense within the BJP-led NDA that it can be very well speculated that if it comes to power it will surely remain diverted from its primary task, that is, governance and this is an early sign of an unstable government. The BJP's nexus with the VHP and RSS are also seen as conspicuously detrimental to peace, harmony and the secular fabric of the country. These organisations are highly militant in nature and are propagators of the fanatic fundamentalist *Hindutva* ideology. Paul Brass, a US academician and an expert on Indian politics, believes the BJP does not have a great future in India; neither does Modi. And it is a disgrace that he is still not punished and yet so highly talked about in the press. He does not think he will make it as the next Prime Minister. (*The Telegraph*, Sunday, August 4, 2013)

Recently the BJP-led NDA's rebel ally Nitish Kumar of the JD(U), TMC chief and Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the BJD's Naveen Patnaik have expressed their desire to form a Third Front for contesting the next Lok Sabha polls. However, if the proposed desire materialises then the most serious problem will arise. All these prime leaders are equally lustful aspirants for the post of the Prime Minister. Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister of Bihar, has been well projected as a leader who has turned the state of development of the State back in shape; he might earn some dividends for himself in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The Bihar development story is much in news and this might help him to fetch a significant number of votes; but eventually it might not be sufficient to form a government at the Centre. Hence the JD(U) will emerge as only one of the significant alliance partners in the next general elections. Similarly, Mamata Banerjee and Naveen Patnaik have some feathers added to their caps. All the three would claim for the same post of prime ministership with no possibility of any compromise in the larger interest, the interst of the governanace for the people. A rat race will start for the post of *primus inter pares*. Eventually the people of the country might be presented with an unstable government ridden with factions and political bickerings over the post of the Prime Minister along with ideological incongruence, dissensions and disagreements on various issues ranging from leadership to policies.

Therefore, again we can conclude that this Third Front also does not have a clearly defined line of leadership which we can look up to for casting our valuable votes. Apart from these, there might be two other forces that can become equally potential contenders for power and a major political competitor to the ruling Congress-led UPA. These forces are a motley crowd of the Leftist parties, and another Front which will comprise of the Bahujan Samaj Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal of Laloo Prasad Yadav and some other important political forces who might became serious contenders for power and they may expect to emerge victorious as an alternative non-Congress, non-BJP government. These Fronts will not fetch the necessary number of seats but might form an alliance with the leading party. These parties neither have a national base nor have their leaders a national appeal. These Fronts too lack the necesssary defined and clear line of leadership. These Fronts may not, in the ultimate analysis, turn out to be significant game-changers.

On the other hand, the Indian National Congress, the leading party of the ruling UPA II has not yet officially declared its prime ministerial candidate for the upcoming 2014 Lok Sabha polls. It has a lot of prospective candidates. Although there is a rumour that the Congress might go for another dynastic succession after 22 years and nominate the newly elevated Rahul Gandhi, the Vice-President of the AICC, as the party's prime ministerial candidate. It appears even the Congress party is not being able to project a confident and a prospective candidate for the post of the PM. UPA I did not confront such a dilemma in declaring its prime ministerial candidate for the 2009 general elections because it had Dr Manmohan Singh who was bestowed with the image of credibility, wisdom and composure. However, this persona had suffered an eclipse with his present government being burdened with charges of corruption (which involved his name as well in cases like 2G, coalgate scams), non-performance, economic crises, issue of rising prices, etc. This has jeopardised the image of the

government of *aam admi* based on which UPA I, headed by Dr Manmohan Singh, managed a comeback as UPA II.

Meanwhile, the Congress is busy meticulously doing its electoral arithmetic by trying to take within its fold a maximum number of allies either by creating Telangana or by giving an assurance to Nitish Kumar of awarding a special status to Bihar or by intelligently wooing Mulayam Singh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party who has kept himself free from the burden of chief ministership by handing over the State's mantle to his son so that he can become more visible in Delhi once the 2014 Lok Sabha elections are over.

♦

The Congress-led UPA II is grappling with crises which include charges of corruption ranging from CWG, 2G, mining scams etc. to rising prices of essential commodities etc. The allegations of corruption involve many of its allies as well as leaders from the Congress itself. The Congress lost the 1989 general elections following the alleged involvement of Rajiv Gandhi in the Bofors scam. So it is being speculated that the series of corruption charges might have a dampening effect on the Congress' electoral fortunes and might contribute positively to the electoral fortunes of the BJP. Following the cases of corruption, India witnessed a crusade against corruption under the banner of 'India Against Corruption' movement (which has been compared with the JP movement of 1974) for a Jan Lokpal Bill to cleanse the system of improper practices. Although the Congress has resorted to strategies like maintaining silence, giving assurances, strong denial of any wrongdoing, sacrificing allies etc. but still the Congress might have to forego many seats and may have lesser share in the number of votes in the next general elections.

The party emanating from the corruption crusade, namely, the Aam Admi Party (AAP) under the stewardship of Arvind Kejriwal, a civil society activist, might help in splintering the votes of the Congress and BJP respectively. Kejriwal played an opportunistic role by forming a party thereby giving manifestation to his own political aspirations under the veil of a corruption-crusader. The AAP is a political novice with no potential of emerging as a leading party. Unlike other parties the Congress does not have any such significant leadership vacuum as such but it is now saddled with the *problem of credibility* before the masses. Hence it might have to win the elections not exclusively on the basis of pro-people policies such as Food Security Bill, Land Acquisition Bill, Pension Reform Bill or direct benefit transfer schemes etc. or through a popular leader but emphasing more on the policy of winning the maximun number of alllies. The election mandate will be fragmented with no party having absolute number of seats and a coalition government is for sure on the cards followed by continuous bargaining, negotiations and messy compromises.

Hence it can be concluded that such a big democracy like India is passing through a crisis of a clearly defined leadership especially in the case of the BJP. This a matter of serious concern. The parties running for the next general elections are trying to rely on the strategy of popularity in terms of declaring their candidate for the post of "first among the equals". None has a required line of leadership focussed on concern for welfare of the people. Vested interests of the leaders for power politics have become primary, while governance, development, progress, public service seem to have become secondary. This feature makes the party system more polarised when competition for power has become more plural enhancing the multi-party feature of the Indian party system. The political novices emerging now and then will surely help in splintering the votes leading to significant reconfigurations and realignments in the Indian party system. ■

Footnote

1. It is being claimed that the Gujarat model of development pursued by Chief Minister Narendra Modi is lopsided and is obsessed with industrialisation at the cost of local economies and destruction of natural habitat and coastal regions, diversion of forest, irrational land grab etc. His expansion of 'only industries' have affected the livelihood of the people depending on agriculture, fishery, farming, small and medium-sized industries. His policies just favour big industrial projects without proper rehabilitation leading to lack of employment, immigration issues, illiteracy, rise in social crimes like dowry, theft, malnourishment, poverty, loss of livelihood etc. See Himanghshu Upadhaya, "Building Euphoria", *Frontline*, May 17, 2013. and Ajoy Ashirwad Mahaprashasta, "The Great Land Grab", *Frontline*, May 17, 2013.

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The General Election of 2014 and the Changes in the Indian Party System

Mouli Dey

Abstract

General elections in India in present times are fought more on the plank of four Ps where populist policies promises to satisfy the pangs of hunger for comprehensive development and vigorous election campaign by a popular leader raising people's hopes and aspirations to achieve development for an developing nation. However, survival and continuity of the popular government depends on the symmetry between 'proclamations' and 'performance'. General elections also realign and reconfigure the party system.

Keywords: General Election, Popularity, Populism, Performance, Positivity

1. Introduction

The study of Indian party system has always been a matter of interest. Time and again the Indian party system has witnessed sea changes and reconfiguration. This adds to create quite a messy picture of the party system. The Indian party system not only produces surprising results but it is a critical mediating factor in producing social changes in the society. The Indian party system offers a menu of choices and acts as an instrument for social transformation realigns power structure and the basic dynamics of the society.

James Manor (2002) in his article '*Parties and the Party System*' has tried to uphold the impact of various factors such as defection, increase in mass consciousness, people's urge for development and the performance of a ruling government on the Indian party system and the subsequent changes in it due to these factors. Prakash Sarangi (2002) too has shown his interest in the study of the Indian party system which underwent several transformations. In his article entitled "*Economic Reforms and Changes in the Party System*" he has highlighted the fact that socio-economic development and the economic reforms that have been undertaken has a direct bearing on the nature of the party system. He has tried to show how this tends to influence the voting pattern and the behavior of the electorate. The change that has occurred in the role and attitude of the Congress and the transformation that the Congress has undergone has introduced significant changes in the nature of the party system in the country. Moreover as it seems the lack of any established political culture and the undying pangs of hunger for development has led to transitional shifts and transformation of the Indian party system. Its demise from the hegemonic position has brought significant changes in the nature of the party system. Since election is a very significant component of a democratic political structure

therefore with the aid of the electoral results an attempt has been made to show the reconfigurations in the party system.

In recent times the electoral logic of the Indian electorate irrespective of any class, caste, community and language has been mostly guided by their judgment on the records of parity between 'as promised' and 'as delivered'. The present electoral logic defies the claim of Lipset and Rokkan (1967)[1] that cleavages and conflicts influence the trajectory of the party system of a nation. On the contrary, besides cleavages and conflicts, "aspirations" (for growth, development, social justice and equity) of the populace translates into the party system and determines the trajectory of the party system at both the levels. The Indian population desires to rise above and shed the status of being citizen of an underdeveloped country. It wishes to tread the path of development or growth along with equity through various social welfare schemes. Hence as discernible in our opinion the Indian politics and the Indian party system is driven by four Ps *Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivity.*

This trend consolidated most particularly since 2004 general election when people of this diversified country set aside issues such as caste, religion, language, *mandir-masjid* issue and gave a clear mandate for 'progress'. BJP's pro-rich policies, the issue of rising unemployment and the catastrophic impact of its fanatic Hindutva campaign prepared its graveyard for burial. This prompted the Indian voters to give another chance to the Congress party which portrayed itself as the party of the common man or '*aam admi*'. Once again the party which was not able to deliver was punished by the Indian voters. Hence, BJP-led NDA was ousted from power. Hence it became clear that the party which perform and enable the nation to tread the path of development will survive in a developing nation. This prompts the masses to give whimsical verdicts which ultimately pave the way towards politics of alliances, fronts and coalitions with no adherence or allegiance to any one single party. With every passing day India is witnessing participatory upsurge among all the sections of the society. These sections pass their valuable verdict as the course of politics demands.

In underdeveloped countries it is the performance of the government which determines its ability to come back to power. This has been the guiding factor for determining the mandate of the people in India since 1967. This article attempts to see how parameters like populism, personality, performance and ability is used to raise the hope of the electorates by a political party for a better tomorrow and how these parameters determines the outcome of the General Election. Besides, it deals with the most important strategies adopted by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to come to power with the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The article finally looks at how the performance of the different political parties in the 16th Lok Sabha polls has cast its impact upon the nature of the Indian party system.

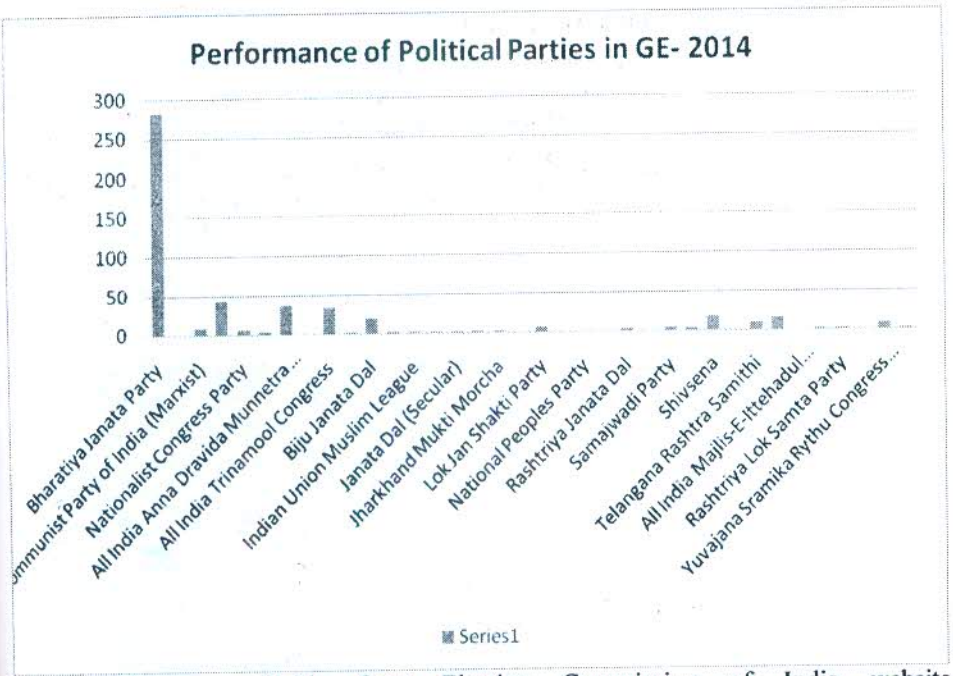
2. General Election to the 16th Lok Sabha

The General Election to the 16th Lok sabha held during April-May 2014 saw a comprehensive victory for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with a very pronounced verdict. Such a victory is bound to invite some interpretations as BJP is not dependent on any of its pre-poll allies to form the government at the Union level. The 2014 Lok Sabha election establishes the fact that the country craves and stands for 'development' and aspires for 'good governance[2]. The strategy of alluring the electorate with the 'Gujarat development model' reaped benefits for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The series of corruption charges and scams, the issue of rising prices of essential commodities hurting the ordinary people, spiraling inflation, faltering growth, weakening currency, rising fiscal deficit, falling sensex, rising cases of crimes against women etc. wrested the chances of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government from coming to power for the third consecutive time.

2.1 Interpreting the General Elections 2014

The election to the 16th Lok Sabha was unique in its own way as it for the time since independence produced a mandate that installed a 'party' at the central level with absolute majority that is otherwise marked for its indulgence in fanatic Hindu fundamentalism to rule a country that pledges in the name of secularism. Unprecedented popularity earned through rigorous media advertising, undying hope and unparalleled electoral campaign of Narendra Modi saw the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerging as the largest party by securing an absolute majority on its own with 282 seats polling 20.58 percent of votes and 31.34 percent of seats. BJP along with its allies secured 336 seats and Congress with its allies secured only 59 seats. Left front has secured 11 seats only. The nation has offered Modi and his government a chance to deliver growth and governance without any hurdles by reposing their faith in him and thereby bestowing him with maximum number of seats. The verdict shows that the nation has breached the gap between rural-urban, upper caste-lower caste, rich-poor, Hindu-Muslim and stood only for growth, progress and overall development of rural India besides the urban India.

Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) has been forced to bite the dust. Indian National Congress (INC) secured 44 seats polling 12.82 percent of votes and 19.52 percent of seats. INC was reduced to double digits for the first time in general election. In the 2009 Lok Sabha election it had secured 206 seats on its own. It secured 162 less seats in this election in comparison to 2009 Lok Sabha election. This is BJP's best ever performance in a general election since its inception in 1980. It has bagged 166 seats more than 2009 general election.



Source: Figures available from Election Commission of India website http://eciresults.nic.in/

2.2 Lok Sabha Polls 2014: Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivity

The BJP resorted to its sole trump card Narendra Modi (who had been chosen consecutively thrice as the chief minister of Gujarat) and his well professed 'Gujarat model'[3] of development for winning the 2014 election. The assembly elections that were held in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat resurged gallons of confidence within the Bharatiya Janata Party. BJP benefitted immensely from the fallouts of Congress-led UPA government which was voted back to power for the second time for its pro-people agendas. The second tenure has been a watershed for UPA II as it got riddled with series of corruption charges such as 2G spectrum scam, Commonwealth Games scam, Adarsh Housing society scam, Augusta Westland chopper scam, Railway bribery and coal mine scam that maligned its pro-people image based on which it had revived itself to the centre stage with the 14th general election. These cases of corruption caused huge losses amounting to crores of rupees to the national exchequer and this antagonized the common man. Rising cases of crimes against women questioned the administrative credibility of the UPA II government.

The pangs of hunger for development and better governance compelled the Indian electorate to vote for a change in government from Congress–led UPA to a BJP-led government[4]. The crux for survival for any government in

power in a developing country like India which is always yearning for progress and massive development in all the parameters is to 'perform' and translate rhetoric into intent. The corrupt image of the Congress and DMK have contributed negatively towards the electoral fortune of the Congress led UPA coalition and had produced serious repercussions that solely contributed positively towards the electoral fate of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The projection of Narendra Modi, the sculpted icon of development, aroused hope among the people of the country that they can now taste development. Assurance of rural growth and generation of rural jobs, pro-active, pro-people good governance along with emphasis upon inclusive and sustainable development worked wonder for the party[5]. In Modi people saw hope and credibility because he has been voted thrice back to power by the people of Gujarat[6].

3. The Reasons why BJP emerged as the 'new' Majority Party: Popularity and Positivity

Highly strategized and calculated campaign by BJP reaped benefits for the party. Emphasizing on core issues like development, good governance and covertly gliding with its core ideology of Hindutva politics or politics based on religion to consolidate its base when required then quickly shifting its campaigning strategy towards caste-based politics by wooing Dalits, OBCs to form new and enhanced support bases produced wonder for the party. Social and geographical barriers have been overcome with BJP's highly intelligently strategized electoral campaign, claims party president Rajnath Singh. Hence it has touched all the basic issues of concern as politics in India revolves around issues like religion, caste, development and aspiration for good governance. The repeated insistence of good days lying ahead (*acche din aane wale hain*) if Modi is voted to power was also able to catch the fancies of the development starving nation. It used every possible medium to spread the aura of Modi and resorted to emphatic and effective slogans like '*aab ki baar Modi Sarkar*' (this time it should be Modi-led government), '*Sabka saath, sabka vikas*' (collective efforts inclusive growth) to highlight its willing to adhere to an all inclusive policy and eschew its majoritarian policy. Its majoritarian and fundamentalist attitude was its biggest loophole that has prevented the Bharatiya Janata Party to have greater mass appeal in this secular country. The minorities and the disadvantageous section of the society have since the Bombay and Gujarat riots have perceived BJP with skepticism, fear and disdain.

Moreover, placing Amit Shah in charge of election campaign in Uttar Pradesh played dividends for the party. Shah is credited to have crafted a very well planned election campaign in the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) by meticulously preparing a consortium of diligent cadres, striking every chord correctly with regard to caste calculations as well as simultaneously pursuing its traditional *hindutva* politics by wooing its core support base of the upper caste

Hindus. BJP retained its hard line Hindu credentials. During the 1980s the communal agenda of BJP centered on issues like Babri mosque, construction of Ram temple and the city of Ayodhya. Earlier it mobilized Hindu voters through anti-cow slaughter movement during the 1966-67 and insisted and protested in front of the Parliament to pass law for prohibiting it. In the 2014 electoral campaign, apart from issues like development, eradication of corruption, good governance, mobilization in the name of 'identity' was also pursued as BJP had opted the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the most religiously significant Hindu city on the bank of sacred river Ganges, as its citadel and subtly remained associated with its pro-Hindutva strategy to attract its vote from its traditional bases such as upper- caste, urban Hindus, small and middle businessmen and Hindu traders, cultivators, etc. (Hansen & Jaffrelot, p.4, 1996). Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state that sends eighty Member of Parliament to Lok Sabha. Since the presence of the party was not much impressive in the north-east and down south therefore winning maximum number of seats from the most populous Hindi heartland state[7] was imperative for the party to capture power at the centre. Therefore, to rekindle the feeling of 'being Hindu' and to popularize Modi, its prime ministerial candidate for Lok sabha election 2014, for bigger electoral gains in the state of Uttar Pradesh the BJP leadership very intelligently opted for the most sacred city of the Hindus, Varanasi, which is primarily an ancient Hindu holy site and prudently abandoning the much controversial site Ayodhya which has left unheeling bruises in the memory of the people of India. This step yielded the desired benefit for the party and eventually the BJP could garner as much as seventy three seats in the state following the 2014 general election. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google plus came to the rescue of the party that made its campaign more approachable and kept the party connected with millions of voters. The extensive use of the social media reaped benefits for the party significantly[8].

BJP made significant inroads in Bihar, Maharashtra besides Uttar Pradesh and retained its outstanding performances in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajashthan. Choosing Modi the prime ministerial candidate despite of opposition from the old vanguards paid dividends for the party as well. On the contrary, despite of every odd the party has tried to put up a united picture among the upper rung leaders in front of the nation to win their faith and confidence[9]. The party refurbished its line of leadership by discreetly sidelining the leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi, L.K.Advani, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Shourie, Jaswant Singh, Yaswant Sinha and displacing them with a new team of leaders like Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Narendra Modi, Nitin Gadkari etc.

Modi's electrifying campaign across the nation created a wave of support for the party. Modi enthused energy in the electoral campaign and emerged as the star campaigner of the 2014 general election. The positive image of the prime ministerial candidate worked in favour of the party in whom

people saw the leader of the nation who can steer them out of poverty, unemployment and some such other problems. He in order to effectively identify and connect himself with the common *masses* and create a greater appeal referred to his humble origin of a poor, simple '*chaiwala*' (tea vendor) in his early life who has now dared to challenge the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty[10].

4. The Reasons for Congress-led UPA Debacle: Performance

The Congress party could not raise hope and sell vision for a better tomorrow among the masses. It appeared as though they were overburdened with their own under performance, inefficiency and stains of corruption. They failed to assess people's mood which yearned for development, performance, enhanced services, good life, strong, decisive leadership and a stable and an 'able' government. They on the contrary Congress during its election campaign got engaged in dirty blame game and had no such significant achievements to bolster up on[11]. Rahul Gandhi lacked the enigma and energy and could not emerge as 'one' among the many[12]. Their last minute alliance with Lalu Prasad's RJD was seen with skepticism by the common masses as he himself was behind the bars for his alleged involvement in the fodder scam. With time it was seen the credibility of the Congress-led UPA government faded away. Large investment in social sector, a surge in the investment in infrastructure building, rapid increase in rural consumption pattern, increasing per capita income for three times during the last decade, making attempts to bring transparency through Right To Information Act (RTI), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MNREGA) programme, food security bill, pension reform bill, land acquisition bill, direct transfer schemes and some such other legislations were some of the achievements of the Congress-led UPA government over the last ten years. Yet efforts like MNREGA were found to be riddled with ineptitude and corruption. The land acquisition bill[13] that took long span of time to come up was said to be full of flaws and not well enacted as some section of the industry felt that the process of land acquisition from the farmers was long and cumbersome and involved exorbitant compensations[14]. Its hasty initiatives for foreign direct investment in retail and insurance sector, cutting government expenditure by introducing direct cash transfer scheme (which will indirectly reduce the burden of subsidy) invited criticism for UPA II government.

When the series of corruption scandal jolted the credibility of the pro-people image of the Congress-led UPA government they resorted to strategies like maintaining silence, giving assurances, strong denial of any wrongdoing, sacrificing allies, sending tainted leaders behind the bar etc. They could have won back the confidence of the people of India by cancelling the tainted contracts, denying and protesting in public against the quick bail of the accused, discontinuing alliance with DMK completely rather than waiting until the latter itself deserted it on the issue of the protection of the Tamils in Sri Lanka,

refraining from shielding corrupt ministers which could have strengthened the stature of the office of the Prime Minister who is the leader of the nation. Rather than resisting against the corruption crusade (India against Corruption campaign under the stewardship of Anna Hazare) the Congress party should have associated itself actively through its prominent cadres to testify the fact in front of the nation that it too abhors the evil practice of corruption and could have saved the party from the worst ever downslide to a great extent. To make the matter worse for the Congress-led government the Nirbhaya rape case in Delhi (which then had Congress-led state government), the Shakti Mill Mumbai gangrape case (where too Congress-NCP duo ran the state government) corroded the validity of the government. These series of crises ultimately made difficult for the Congress party to win back the faith of the general populace of the nation. The only way the population of a democratic country can show their wrath is through the electoral verdict. The Congress-led UPA government has been severely admonished for its incompetence, inefficiency, non-performance and apathy. Therefore, INC could secure a very dreary tally of seats and scored zero in some ten states such as Rajashthan, Tripura, Gujarat, Goa, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and performed miserably in West Bengal by securing four seats. In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh it could bag just two seats respectively. In Karnataka it could win just nine seats, in Kerala it fetched some eight seats and in Assam and Punjab it could garner just three seats. In Chattisgarh and Haryana it scored one seat respectively.

5. 2014 Electoral Performance of BJP

The good showing of BJP in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan during the 2013 assembly polls was an early sign of the probability that BJP might leave its imprint in the national election, remained unheeded by the Congress Working Committee. The BJP performed outstandingly in the North and in the West that contributed extensively towards the victory of the party in the 2014 general election in the country. Rajasthan under the leadership of Vasundhara Raje captured all of the twenty five Lok Sabha seats. In Gujarat, BJP had a clean sweep over all the twenty-six Lok Sabha seats. Madhya Pradesh under the leadership of Shivraj Singh Chauhan fetched twenty-seven of the twenty nine Lok Sabha seats and Chattishgarh too voted in favour of the right wing party by bestowing it with ten out of the eleven Lok Sabha seats.

BJP made inroads in the North–East by occupying one seat in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam as well by bagging seven seats thereby surpassing INC and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF). Although in the last assembly election BJP was drubbed by INC in Karnataka but the trend got reversed when it surpassed all the other parties by occupying 17 of the 28 Lok Sabha seats and this contributed considerably towards the overall tally of seats for the party. Uttarakhand contributed all its five Lok Sabha seats in the

share of BJP's total tally of seats. In Bihar too BJP had put up an outstanding performance by fetching for itself twenty two of the forty Lok Sabha seats by surpassing INC, Janata Dal-United (JD-U) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The votes of the Yadavs, OBC and Dalits as well has drifted towards BJP due to 'NaMo' effect that claims to provide development and upliftment to all irrespective of caste, community, creed, religion through his motto '*sabka saath, sabka vikas*' (collective effort inclusive development). Delhi after its disappointment with INC and Aam Admi Party (AAP) finally has now resorted to BJP by conferring it with all the seven Lok Sabha seats. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP gave its hallmark performance by bagging seventy one seats out of the eighty Lok Sabha seats and this led to rise in the share of the seat for the party that contributed significantly towards its success. The magnificent electoral campaign designed by Amit Shah, general secretary of BJP, paid manifold. Appealing to vote for the party from the Jats to take revenge from the Muslims for the Muzaffarnagar riot in U.P led to consolidation of OBC vote behind the party that triggered its total number of seats[15]. Varanasi resonated with slogans like '*Har Har Modi*' whereby efforts were made to equate Modi with Lord Shiva, the Hindu mythological god, so as to consolidate the votes of the Hindus and the Brahmins for the party. BJP made its presence felt in West Bengal and Punjab as well by winning two seats respectively. In Maharashtra, it routed out Congress-NCP duo by winning twenty three seats along with eighteen seats grabbed by Shiv Sena, its long time ally in the state. In Odisha, despite of any strong presence in the state, BJP could manage to win one seat. Himachal Pradesh bestowed its entire four seats in the favour of the BJP. The 'NaMo wave' also swept Haryana where it had secured seven seats in comparison to one seat of INC. Even in Jammu and Kashmir, BJP could leave its imprint and could bag three seats whereas Nationalist Conference drew a blank.

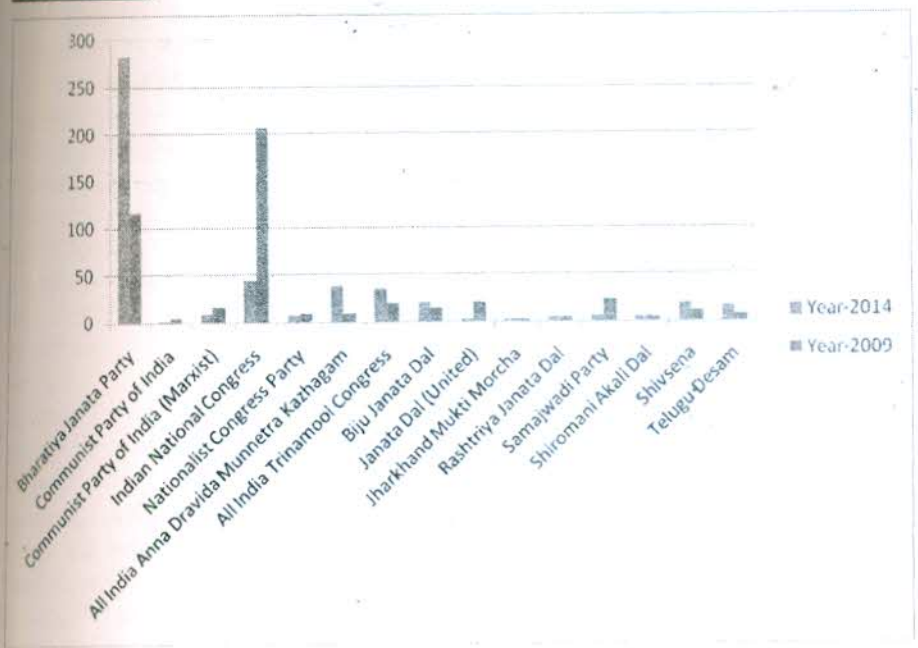
6. The Translation of *aspirations* into Party System: Populism

When all the states have thrown aside regional considerations and voted in favour of Brand Modi and his much hyped and celebrated 'Gujarat model', four states remained an aberration namely, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha and Tripura. This election yielded results for those who performed and was prepared for delivering governance and development. Jayalalitha was paid off for her pro-people and development oriented policies such as providing drought relief to the farmers, rice at Rs. 2 per kg, distributing mixer and grinder and electric fan free of cost, ensuring free education along with laptop, books, bicycles, school bags to the students free of cost, etc. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham (AIADMK) gave a laudable performance in the state of Tamil Nadu and bagged thirty seven Lok Sabha seats polling 3.3 percent of votes eliminating its prime opponent Dradiva Munnetra Kazhagham (DMK) which drew a blank probably for its linkages with the 2G spectrum scam. Similarly, Naveen Patnaik of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Orissa too kept his

record by bagging twenty of the twenty one Lok Sabha seats poling 1.7 percent of votes. Patnaik is credited with efficiency and administrative efficacy and these has been considered as some of the prime reason for his spectacular performance. His populist measures like subsidized rice for Rs. 1 per kg, old age pension and social security schemes, distribution of free umbrella, laptop, clothing and school uniforms to the destitute, providing houses to homeless families not included in Below Poverty Line (BPL) list and bicycles to girl students paid profusely for the party. West Bengal routed out INC and Left and maintained its adherence to Trinamool Congress. Despite of some serious challenges confronting the pro-people image of the party such as Sharada chit fund scam that involved some of its own MLAs, the haunting Park Street rape case and the subsequent forced transfer issue of Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Damini Sen, the Kamduni rape case where the family members of the victim alleged involvement of some Trinamool leaders in the incident of rape the party was still able to withhold its performance and in fact improved its number of seats from nineteen to thirty four of the forty two Lok Sabha seats polling 3.8 percent of votes. Mamata Banerjee kept her voters allured with her simplicity and catchy phrases, resorted to popular strategies such as providing financial assistance to the youth through schemes like *yuvasree* and aided girl child through schemes like *kanyasree* which assured Rs.500 per year for schooling and transferred Rs. 25000 to the family bank account when a girl turns 18, besides removing entry taxes on goods. Although Left has performed abysmally poor in the state of West Bengal but could retain its performance only in Tripura where the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M) won both the seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The popularity of Manik Sarkar, the Chief Minister of Tripura, and his political acumen are some of the most significant factors that have enabled CPI (M) to retain its last bastion. Apart from this, attaining self-sufficiency in food, generating employment through several projects, ability to restore and maintain peace and harmony among the tribal indigenous population and the Bengali settlers, providing access to safe drinking water and provision of 35 kg of rice at Rs. 2 per kg for BPL families are some of the factors that contributed towards its consolidation in the state and its performance in the Lok Sabha polls. Left as of now has slipped into oblivion. It stands almost eradicated In West Bengal. When it parted ways with UPA- I in 2009 over the nuclear deal in the name of ideology the general populace was unable to grasp their intellectual projections. The Left leadership stands in disarray and failed to adapt itself to the changing social and political dynamics, lacks the organisational strength which was earlier its hallmark. It lacks its presence among the backward classes. The leadership needs to be revamped, enthused with energy, zeal to work and broader vision for a nation. Moreover, it always lacked an impressive national appeal. It was mostly restricted to Kerala, West Bengal where it ruled for more than three decade and in Tripura where it still maintains its foothold. Kerala still shuffles between Left Democratic Front (LDF) and Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

The smaller parties that had played bigger roles have now with the 2014 general election been cut to size. Parties like Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janata Dal (United) who have earlier played burgeoning influence in Indian politics since the late 1980s have suffered a nose dive with the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. BSP, a significant regional player representing the Dalits drew a blank whereas SP that is now in possession of the state mantle in Uttar Pradesh could bag just five seats polling 3.4 percent of votes. SP was accused of minority appeasement by its own traditional voters and this lead to the swinging away of the Yadav, Jats and OBC votes from the party. BJP by resorting to caste-based mobilization during the electoral campaign, despite being traditionally an anti-Dalit and anti-Muslim party, have cut into the share of votes of the parties representing these sections of the society. Communal polarization following the Muzaffarnagar riots in Western Uttar Pradesh between the Jats (who recently have been conferred with the category of OBC) and the Muslims went against the electoral fortune of Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Ajit Singh and Bahujan Samaj Party as well. The rise of BJP proved detrimental for popular regional players like RJD and Janata Dal (United) as well. Their seat tally has reduced drastically to four and two respectively. However, regional parties like Telegu Desam Party (TDP), Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of Ramvilas Paswan, Akali Dal in Punjab and Shiv Sena (SS) gained immensely in the 2014 Lok Sabha election by forging their opportunistic alliance with BJP. New entrant Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS), a state based party, headed by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) too swept the Lok Sabha and assembly election with thumping number of seats. TRS bagged eleven of the seventeen Lok Sabha seats polling 1.2 percent of votes and out passed Congress, YSR Congress, TDP-BJP combine in the state assembly election by capturing sixty three seats in the 119 member Telangana assembly. The victory for TRS was obvious as its leader was the architect of the 29th state that took birth after a relentless struggle for statehood. His arduous campaign and motivating speeches enchanted voters in its favour. Moreover, the victory was the reward for his struggle. This election has pruned most of the regional parties but the time to write an obituary has not yet come. It would be premature to conclude that regional satraps have lost their essence and relevance in the Indian politics, more particularly at the central level or that 'issue' based politics have replaced or sidelined identity-based politics in such a heterogeneous society.

Comparative performance of Political Parties during Lok Sabha election 2009 and 2014



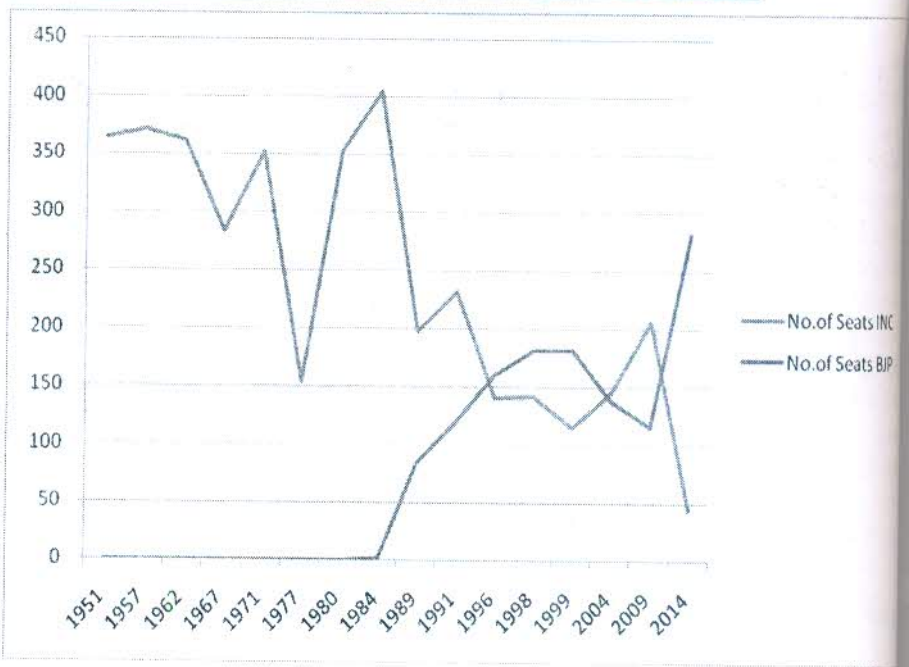
Source: Figures available from Election Commission of India website http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/statistical_report.aspx and http://eciresults.nic.in/

Another new entrant the Aam Admi Party (AAP) too gave a dismal performance in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Following these cases of corruption, India witnessed a crusade against corruption under the banner of 'India Against Corruption' movement (which has been compared with the Jaya Prakash movement of 1974) for a Jan Lokpal Bill to cleanse the system of improper practices. Eventually the party emanating from the corruption crusade namely the Aam Admi Party (AAP) under the stewardship of Arvind Kejriwal, a civil society activist, was expected to play a decisive role in the 2014 election. But its 49 days tenure as a state ruler which failed to deliver as promised led to erosion of its charisma that it had spelt over the people of India with its crusade faded away. People failed to repose their faith in it as it clearly displayed its administrative ignorance and ineptitude while in power heading the Delhi state government. Kejriwal played an opportunistic role by forming a party thereby giving manifestation to his own political aspirations under the veil of corruption crusader. AAP is a political novice with no significant experience of running a government and this acted as a deterrent towards its electoral performance. Although it had contested 443 seats from all over the country but could win just four seats in Punjab only.

7. 2014 Lok Sabha Election and the Realigned Indian Party System

With the 16th Lok Sabha election the Indian party system has al witnessed sea changes. The Indian party system as it exhibits is multiparty nature since its origin, although it keeps reconfiguring structurally with eve election. The Indian party system from a competitive multi-party system wi Congress predominance as the majority party till 1967 that remain fragmented as well as binodal since 1967 has once again transformed into competitive multi-party system with Bharatiya Janata Party's predominance the 'majority party'[16] as it has secured only 20.58 percent of votes and 31.3 percent of seats.

Comparative Performance of INC and BJP since 1951-2014



Source: Figures available from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementati website http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/SYB2014/ch43.html

The trend of bipolarization, fragmentation and coalition politics h suffered a setback although these trends have not evaporated completely. T party system still remains bipolarized with BJP at one end and Congress a other parties at the other pole trying to revamp them. The Indian party syste has always remained in a state of flux therefore the equation might get revers at any course of time. The Indian party system still presents a messy picture in many states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Sikkim, voted their respective state-based parties and Tripura voted for CPI(M) there

keeping the party system fragmented in nature. States like Telangana, Seemandhra, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Puducheery, Bihar, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh that went to assembly polls subsequently, voted for non-BJP parties such as TRS, TDP, BJD, SDF, AIADMK, Congress-DMK alliance, JD(U)-RJD alliance and Trinamool Congress respectively retaining the fragmented nature of the party system. Arunachal Pradesh too voted for a non-BJP alternative. Congress had a clean sweep in the state by securing thirty nine seats of the sixty assembly berths. BJP won just five seats and People's Party of Arunachal secured a lone seat. Similarly, in Odisha BJD stormed back to power by capturing 117 seats in the 147 member assembly. In the Seemandhra assembly election TDP- BJP combine secured 106 seats out of the 175 assembly seats. In Sikkim, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) emerged victorious by winning 22 seats of the 32 assembly seats. The Indian Party System still stands bifurcated into the national and state level. Some stability, coherence and uniformity has been restored at the central level only as the mandate went in favour of a party that had crossed the half-way mark all by itself which breaks the spell of coalition government. BJP came back to power at the centre after more than a decade. It is the first party since 1984 to get a majority on its own at the union level as since 1989 coalition form of government had become the order of the day. Since 1989 not a single political party was able to secure absolute majority on its own at the union level. Three national elections between the period 1996 till 1999 and five votes of 'no confidence' indicated a high level of political instability of the Indian party system. Moreover, it is credited to be the first non-Congress party to have won an absolute majority on its own. The verdict restored some essence to the lost relevance of the form of Parliamentary Democracy and also strengthened the office of the Prime Minister as the overwhelming role of the small parties was reduced as the ruling party had absolute majority on its own.

8. Conclusion

The Indian Party system has acquired coherence after a long span of almost more than two decades. The Opposition party (BJP) has elevated itself to the position of the ruling party by bagging an absolute majority of seats. An informal coalition structure of government exists at the central level although the leading party has crossed the half way mark on its own. This development ensures a higher degree of stability in the way of ensuring governance to the masses with the absence of disruptions, continuous bargaining, negotiations and messy compromises with the coalition partners. 2014 general election is significant because the intensely disparate coalition era has come to a halt although the Indian party system still stands bifurcatd into two levels due to the fragmented pattern of voting behaviour of the electorates. However, BJP can withhold its status of a majority party in the Indian party system only if it is able to deliver, perform and resort to dedicated and sincere implementation of

its programmes and policies. The Modi-led Government has to now create policies that would respond to people expectations and translate promises into actions. The BJP-led Central Government should work ardently and with great determination to resolve some of the grave problems like – corruption in the administration, financial lay off, fiscal deficits, unemployment, poverty, accelerating agricultural growth, expanding primary education, reducing gap between the rich and the poor, minimize threats to climate change, take efforts to control pollution, environmental hazards, terrorism and insurgencies, the Naxalite challenge and others threats to internal and external security, etc. to cement its credibility.

Notes

1 Party system will reflect principal cleavages and conflicts in the society. According to Lipset and Rokkan, cleavages manifest in several forms along the socio-economic, religious, ethnicity and urban-rural parameters. *See* Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *"Cleavages, Structure, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction"* in "Party sysytem and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives", Free Press, New York, 1967.

2 *"Only NDA can bring about change in India: Narendra Modi"*, www.ndtv.com, May 11, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 10:45 am).

3 For understanding of 'Gujarat Model' See http://www.narendramodi.in/

4 *"Leadership factor in 2014 polls"*, The Hindu, May 28, 2014.

5 BJP Election Manifesto (2014) :http://www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2014_full_manifesto_english_07.04.2014.pdf

6 *"India has won! Good days ahead: Modi"*, The Hindu, May 16, 2014.

7 Census 2001 data on Population by Religious communities. 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).

8 *"How BJP's Online Campaign Proved Vital For Success"*, www.ndtv.com, May 20, 2014(accessed on May 22, 2014 at 02:10 pm).

9 The futile future of the Bharatiya Janata Party therefore depends in its ability to perform as well as maintain cohesion and cordiality among its cadres. The party's linkages with the militant organisation like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) is still seen with apprehension. On various occasions these organisations have regulated the functioning of the BJP. RSS is a militant Hindu nationalist organisation and VHP, a Hindu revivalist organisation that favours adopting a militant Hindu stand on political and social issues (Malik and Singh, 1994). The RSS under the stewardship of Mohan Bhagat have negotiated

to bring unanimity among the rank and file of the BJP leadership to endorse Modi's candidature for prime ministership for the 2014 Lok Sabha election. There was considerable opposition from the top leadership of BJP over the possible choice of Modi as the prime ministerial candidate. Sushma Swaraj and L.K Advani have firmly opposed to his candidature. RSS and VHP through their cadre is said to have extensively supported BJP in the ongoing general election campaign and rallies.

[10] *"Modi-chaiwala to dream merchant"*, The Hindu, May 17, 2014.

[11] Sonal Bhadoria, *"Toffee Model: Rahul Mocks Modi's Gujarat Model"*, www.indiatimes.com, April 14, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 12:05 pm). Also *See "Rahul Gandhi Attacks Narendra Modi in Varanasi"*, www.ndtv.com, May 10, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 12:30 pm)

[12] *"Congress Concedes Weak Campaign, Failed Media Strategy"*, www.ndtv.com, May 16, 2014(accessed on May 23, 2014 at 11:15 am).

[13] The Bill will empower the rights of the farmer as according to the Bill it gives farmers' upto four times more of the market rate for land acquired for the industry and infrastructure.

[14] *"Lok Sabha Passes Land Acquisition Bill"*, www.profit.ndtv.com, August 29, 2013. Also *See "House Panel Decision on Land Bill to hit industry: Adi Godrej"*, www.profit.ndtv.com, May 17, 2012 (accessed on May 22, 2014 at 10:45 am).

[15] Communal passions were flared by some BJP leaders for their own electoral gains during the mahapanchayat that was held after the culmination of the Muzaffarnagar riots during September, 2013 to resolve the conflict between the Jats and the Muslims.

[16] A "*majority party*" is one which by itself possesses more than half of the parliamentary seats. However, a dominant party is one that holds the majority over a long period of political development. *See* Maurice Duverger, "*Political Parties: Their organisation and Activity In Modern states*", 1955, pp.307-309.

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The Resurgence of the Indian National Congress

Mouli Dey

With the 14th Lok Sabha election in 2004, the Congress was back at the centre leading a coalition under the banner of United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The BJP led NDA failed to emerge victorious, although it was presumed that it would enjoy a comfortable re-election. The pro-rich policies, growing unemployment, frequent communal infightings, the fanatic campaign of the ideals of Hindutva and its forceful implementation were some of the reasons for the rejection of the BJP- led NDA government in the 2004 election (Hasan, 2007, p.71). This helped the Congress to return to power and is said to have revived after its decline. This essay tires to sketch the revival of the Congress party and in doing so it discusses the various corrective measures that it had adopted to revive itself from the state of decline. It focuses on the electoral performance of the party in the 14th and the 15th Lok Sabha and the consecutive state assembly elections and analyses the reasons for the resurgence of the Congress party.

Congress was in a state of decline for well over a decade. In the 1999 election, the Congress registered its lowest ever number of seats in the Lok Sabha with 114 MPs (Bhambri, 2007, p.200). BJP emerged as the single largest party though was not able to secure an absolute majority. Meanwhile, the Congress was already in a state of perplex. It found itself alienated from the Muslims, dalits, adivasis and the backward castes.[1]

The Congress party since Indira Gandhi's era was becoming largely insensitive to the regional needs and demands in its bid to become unitary in approach. The policy of over centralization adopted by Indira Gandhi to arrest the growing power of the non-Congress state governments proved to be a boomerang. Congress was not able to come up with or promise any policies or packages for the otherwise deprived regions or for the ethnic minorities (Hasan, 2007, p.87). Hence, since 1989 we saw there was a rise of BJP and regional as well as caste based anti-Congress parties which were mostly representing the backward and the Scheduled Castes. The parties have garnered support for themselves by exploiting their sentiments and at the expense of the Congress.[2]

Hence emergence of regional parties and the rise of a non-Congress alternative, viz., the BJP have actually led to the absolute downfall of the "Congress System". Since 1996 there was an emergence of a binodal system, largely polarized between the Congress and the BJP and marked by a region based multiparty system. During this period the Congress suffered a significant decline in political support. Congress was striving hard for survival. Under Rao, the Congress was seeping more into the state of decline and was attacked with charges of corruption, for its inability to prevent Babri Masjid demolition and for truncated growth owing to its economic policies.

Sitaram Kesari did not prove suitable as the Congress President. A vacuum was created in the leadership position. After repeated pleas and persuasion Sonia Gandhi took up the reign of control of the party in her hands. Hence Sonia Gandhi, after her succession to the post of Congress President, had formidable task to accomplish. She had to restore back the traditional social constituencies, win back elections in States like UP, Bihar where Congress has been marginalized, project and make herself acceptable as the leader for the Congress party. Hence she pledged to take up some drastic steps to bring back the electoral credibility of the Congress party.

In September 1998, Sonia Gandhi organized a meeting of the Congress party in Pachmari to formulate some strategies for the rejuvenation of the Congress party. In her speech in the brainstorming session at Pachmari, the Congress declared its intention to remain committed to its pledge to provide stability to the nation. She even accepted that Congress was in a state of decline. Congress would accept the coalitional form of government but also expressed her faith and determination to bring back the Congress with full force at the Centre in the long run.[3]

The Pachmari session also identified the major weaknesses which dwelled in the Congress organization and the need to restructure it. Congress felt the need to successfully accommodate the aspirations of the dalits, adivasis and the backward people, particularly in the northern part of the country to revive itself in the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and make attempts to marginalize parties like Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, and Rashtriya Janata Dal. Congress even decided to take adequate measures to ensure full representation to these sections of the society and provide policies and programmes to ameliorate the position of these sections in the society.

Besides, adopting these resolutions the party took up several other strategies

to rejuvenate its image.

1) Those strategies involved the "politics of apology" for the operation Bluestar,[4] the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and apology for not being able to prevent the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992.

2) To woo the sentiments of the Muslim voters the Congress party denied ticket to the veteran leader and former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. He was castigated for not being able to prevent the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992. During this period Congress was at power in the Centre. Moreover, out of its repentance for the anti-Sikh riot in 1984 it also denied tickets to H. K. L. Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar from Delhi.

3) The erosion of base among the poor was one of the prime reasons for its debacle. Hence the party incorporated intensive populist programmes for them. Special packages for the minorities, for people below the poverty line and for the small farmers were also promised by the party in its manifesto.

4) The party also brought in new and young faces within its fold to create a hope in the party and also to create a base among the young generation (Roy, 1999, p.49-50).

To consolidate the position of the Congress party, Sonia Gandhi at an AICC session on 18th December, 1998 even decided to make changes in the organization of the party at various levels. Sonia Gandhi even appointed P. A. Sangma as head of a high level party task force to suggest ways and means to revitalize the organization at various levels. The ideological framework of the Congress was too broadened to include 'stability' as its bedrock besides reposing its faith on secularism, socialism, socio-economic justice and economic self-reliance.

But despite of its effort to revive the organization and to bring ideological clarity Congress did not achieve much success. The hectic campaign by Sonia Gandhi to get back the lost grounds also did not bring much dividend for the party. On the contrary, it was seen that the Congress lost the 1999 general election to the then rising BJP. It in fact, won the lowest number of seats (114 MPs only). Hence the electoral fate of the Congress party was on a steep decline. It emerged victorious only in Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra assembly elections in 1999. Thus the immediate need was to restore the lost value and image of the party. The future of the party in fact

depended upon restoring the esprit de corps among the organizational workers. The need was to instill a feeling of involvement and attachment among the workers at the grassroots level. The A. K. Anthony Committee Report, 2000 suggested to go for sufficient amount of federalization and introduce inner party democracy as to make the state and central leadership and decisions acceptable among the grassroots workers (Khare, 2004, p. 53).

However, all these strategies and campaigns did not yield any benefit for the party which became more evident by its defeat in Gujarat 2002 Assembly election and Madhya Pradesh State election. Hence the Congress underwent a drastic realization that there was a need for some radical political and strategic approach. Thus to take an immediate step towards this direction the Congress organized a 'Vichar Manthan Shivir' at Shimla on 7th, 8th and 9th July, 2003 and adopted the "Shimla Sankalp" which was a fourteen point political charter. The two main flank of attack by Congress was on the ideology of cultural nationalism, and the myth that BJP was spreading with regard to economic reforms and reveal to the people how with its communal campaign BJP was trying to destroy the secular fabric of India. To accomplish it the Congress party decided through the Shimla Sankalp to launch a 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' to expose the failures of the BJP led government.[5]

To successfully accomplish the mammoth task of coming back to power the first and foremost task that was adopted following the Shivir at Shimla was to give voice, respect and position to the party cadres across the country and use their committed service to ensure the victory of the Congress party. It pledged to protect all the great religion and faiths of the country, strengthen the forces of nationalism and strive hard towards preventing the communalization of education (which was being initiated by the BJP led government).

The Sankalp laid greater emphasis on some social and economic issues in keeping with beacon "Congress Ka Haath, Garib Ke Saath". Hence, it assured reliable power, cheaper credit, better seeds, assured irrigation and remunerative prices to 'kisans' across the country; devolve funds, functions and functionaries to empower panchayats, and nagarpalikas; enact national and rural employment guarantee by law; establish food and nutrition security for all, most particularly for the destitute and vulnerable section of the society and for the poor and backward regions of the country; launch major programmes for the economic advancement, social empowerment, political representation and legal equality of dalits, adivasis, OBCs and minorities, etc. Thus it was found that by adopting the Shimla Sankalp under the

stewardship of Sonia Gandhi, Congress displayed its determination to come back to the centre stage by plugging off its loopholes.[6]

Meanwhile the BJP led NDA government which was in power at the centre since 1999 was able to pull on for a little over four years. It was then Atal Behari Vajpayee; the then Prime Minister of NDA government announced the holding of a fresh election much before the term of expiry of his government. As soon as the elections were declared the Congress started to prepare for the electoral battle. Sonia Gandhi left no leaf unturned to revive Congress from its state of decline. The strategy of 'aam admi' or its pro-poor policies was posited against the pro-rich policies of the NDA and the insensitive, irrelevant 'India Shining' campaign of the NDA.

The striking feature of the 2004 election campaign was the manner in which Sonia Gandhi toiled hard to take the messages of the party across the length and breadth of the country. She had emerged as the star campaigner accompanied by son, Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Gandhi. She had toured in some prime states such as Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Haryana, Chattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. Through her Jan Sampark programme she reached out to the people, established contacts, heard their grievances and problems, and propagated the aims, principles and programmes of the Congress party.[7] It was this grassroots contact which enabled her to emerge as the leader of the people. She was in fact able to circulate the message clearly that the Congress is committed to the continuing of economic reforms with a strong component of social welfare and justice and programmes to alleviate poverty (Sharma, 2004, pp.10-12). This dynamic initiative in the name of "Jan Sampark Programme" generated large scale support for the party.[8]

The thrust of the 2004 election manifesto was different from that of the liberalization agenda initiated by the Congress in the early 1990s. The shift suggested the conscious decision taken by the leadership of the Congress party to restore their lost support bases and revive themselves as the ruling party at the centre. In the manifesto for the 2004 Lok Sabha election the Congress was seen to be very critical about the performance of the 1999-2004 BJP led NDA government. To Congress the NDA government had massively increased unemployment by its economic policies, destabilized and lowered growth rates. During its tenure the number of suicides by the farmers across the country had increased, alleged the Congress party in its manifesto along with growing destitutions of the 'khet mazdoors'. The national security was also weak during its tenure. It was even condemned for inciting and sponsoring communal infightings and thereby hampering social harmony of the nation. To authenticate their standpoint Congress even

referred to the Godhra massacre in Gujarat in its manifesto and rhetoric's, blamed the government for instigating violence against the missionaries and exposed communal organizations like Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The most blatant blow to the credibility of the NDA government came with the Kandahar hijack case when three terrorists were released who were in fact escorted by the then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. To make the matter worse the case of Babri Masjid demolition got added. Later on came the attack on the Parliament in December 13, 2001.

Hence to arrest all these loopholes of the then ruling government, the Congress came forward with some solemn resolutions as contained in its 2004 manifesto known as the 'Six Basics' for governance. Thus the 'six basics' were to ensure social cohesion and harmony by taking stringent measures against those who promote hatred and bigotry, secure employment opportunities; improve conditions of the Kisan's and Khet Mazdoors; increase income of the middle class; empower; provide equal opportunities in all the spheres of life for the dalits, Other Backward Classes and for the religious and linguistic minorities (AICC, 2004, p.16).

The 2004 election manifesto focused on some other areas as well. The Congress expressed its intention to accelerate the rate of employment and create employment opportunities. Hence it emphasized that the immediate need would be to revive economic growth and sustain it at the rate of 8 to 10 percent per year. The Congress party identified certain areas where employment opportunities will be expanded and new jobs will be created. This included the organized sector, the agricultural sector, horticulture, aquaculture, afforestation, dairy and agro-processing and adopt the policy of reservation for the socially and economically backward classes and promote communal peace and harmony. To alleviate poverty and create new jobs the party promised to enact a national employment guarantee Act. This was designed with an intention to provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days employment on creating durable community assets through public works programme. Thrust was provided on labour-intensive industries. It even vowed to strengthen Public Distribution System for families below poverty line to ensure food security to millions of Indians and universalize Integrated Child Development Services for a functional Anganwadi in every settlement. Thus the 2004 Lok Sabha election manifesto of the Congress party was the replica of the party's concern for the poor, downtrodden, the deprived, the tribals, dalits, the adivasis and the disadvantaged. The manifesto was laced with provisions that would produce a government of the "aam admi" (common man). The Congress claimed that the Manifesto of 2004 was a 'Jan Dastavejh' (AICC, 2004, pp.17-30).

With all said and done the country marched ahead to face its 14th Lok Sabha Election, 2004. The BJPs confidence was shattered by the voters who inflicted a big shock to BJP and its allies. It forced Vajpayee and his associates to take up the position of the opposition in the 14th Lok Sabha. A new coalition known as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) under the Prime Ministership of Manmohan Singh of the Indian National Congress (INC) as the leading partner came up to acquire the position of the ruling party at the centre along with the outside support of the Leftist parties and with Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party by its side.

The 2004 election empirically showed that the legitimacy of the government in power declines due to its inability to deliver as promised, and as Roy and Wallace puts it, "due to stark mismatch between the electoral promises and new economic policies (Kumar, 2007, p.63). The BJP led NDA government could not match with the expectation of the people of India and failed to perform or deliver as promised during the 1999 electoral campaign. BJP bagged 138 seats out of 364 seats with 22.16 percent of votes. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress surpassed the BJP by only 7 seats by securing 145 seats out of the 417 seats with 26.53 percent of votes in the 2004 Lok Sabha election (http://www.eci.nic.in). Congress and its allies together could muster 219 seats (Sharma, 2004, pp.192-193).

Thus Congress could restore itself back itself to power at the Centre by dethroning the BJP led NDA government. The comeback of the Congress was not absolute. The people's verdict was just in favour of a Congress led secular combine. It is pretty well discernible that the Congress would require a lot to do and deliver governance to the people to revive itself in the major states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab and in the remaining states. Thus, although the centre was marked by the Congress led government but the majority of the states had non-Congress governments. Hence the restoration was not comprehensive. Whatsoever the Indian National Congress was able to rejuvenate itself to the position of the largest party, although it could not manage to secure an absolute majority. Congress was the leading partner in the 2004 coalition government. Hence, this marks only an early sign of its rejuvenation.

To the bewilderment of all Sonia Gandhi declined the post of Prime Ministership and Manmohan Singh assumed the august post of the Prime Minister for the 14th Lok Sabha on 22nd May, 2004. The UPA government adopted the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) which was to be implemented dedicatedly keeping in view the welfare and well-being of the common people of the country which included ensuring legal guarantee of

100 days work, revitalizing the labour laws, strengthening the public distribution system, etc. (Sharma, 2004, pp.233-234). Hence the Common Minimum Programme became the basis of governance of the coalition.

This comeback for the Congress party was very significant and crucial. The clue to survival and sustaining itself as a ruling party at the centre lay in its ability to deliver sincerely and perform diligently. It was a 'do or die' situation for the Congress and hence it had to respect the May 2004 mandate. However, to add to the advantage of the Congress party the accomplishment of the Congress-led UPA government since May 2004 was substantially visible and palpable. At the end of five year tenure of the Congress-led UPA government claimed that they were able to translate to a great extent their electoral promises into reality unlike the 1999 BJP-led NDA government.

The Major Accomplishments (2004-2009): The Congress Claims

The Congress led – UPA government within a year after assumption of its power the government made a historic legislation by passing the Right to Information Act on 15th June, 2005 which ensures greater disclosures. It enabled the citizens to demand responsiveness and accountability and make the administration transparent and humane than ever before. It was a bold step to reduce corruption at all levels and promote public good (AICC, 2009, pp.2-7). In their bid to fulfill a promise made in the Manifesto 2004 it enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to ensure social justice and equity and as a drive to alleviate poverty of the rural poor. It was enacted to provide in all districts 100 days of legally guaranteed work to each rural household in every financial year in public works programme. The essence of the Act is to enhance livelihood security to lakhs of poor rural families and simultaneously enable create durable community assets (AICC, 2009, pp.2-16). The Congress has promised in its Manifesto to provide solace to Crores of farmers by easing debt burden in its 2004 Manifesto. As a part of it, the Congress-led UPA government brought comfort and security to Crores of farmers and their families by announcing increase in the procurement prices; by waiving loans up to Rs.65,000 Crore complete waiver of all loans for marginal farmers; by increasing three-fold credit from banks and reducing interest rates on crop loans; and by extending irrigation facilities (AICC, 2009, p.8). It even provided 27 percent reservations for Other Backward Class students in all professional institutions and enhanced scholarships for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities and other backward classes to pursue higher education (AICC, 2009, pp.8-9). During its reign it has brought hope and provided shield of protection to the interest of the women by passing a new law, namely the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 to

protect women from domestic violence. It also through a legislation accorded equal rights upon women to inherit property (AICC, 2009, p.9). The Congress claimed that it had increased investment in higher education and opened up many more colleges, institutes of technology and management. It had during its tenure taken initiative to strengthen the 'Sarva Siksha Adbhiyaan' and introduced a cooked mid-day meal scheme in all primary schools which in turn has increased the rate of school-goers in the rural as well as urban areas (AICC, 2009, p.9).

Despite of some of the plethora of achievements that the UPA government had accorded within its fold it had to face a crisis on the verge of the expiry of its 2004-2009 tenure when the leftist parties withdrew their outside support from the ruling government due to differences in opinion regarding the nuclear deal with United States of America. It was the wisdom, maturity, calmness and patience of Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India that enabled the Congress-led UPA government to handle the challenge intelligently and with dignity and survive the non-confidence motion with the support of Samajwadi Party and complete its tenure. Consequently the nation was able to have a stable government under the aegis of the Congress Party. This perhaps, helped the Congress to resurge itself to power for the second consecutive term in 2009. It had declared univocally that once brought back to power again it would continue with its implementation of the promises into practice in a systematic manner and without any delay.

When the general election to the 15th Lok Sabha was declared the Congress decided to contest the election alone at the national level and make alliances with comfortable regional parties only at the state level. The Indian National Congress sought a renewed mandate from the people so that it can carry forward all its progressive work, programmes, missions and schemes that had been launched during 2004-2009 tenure. It announced its work programmes for the period of 2009-2014 rededicating itself to the service of the people and strengthening the foundations of India. Hence gave the call "Aam Admi Ke Badhte Kadam Har Kadam Par Bharat Buland" (AICC, 2009).

The work programmes contained some affirmative promises to the people of India. The Congress promised to provide security to each and every citizen and adopt zero tolerance towards terrorism. To make things transparent the Congress announced that it would take measures to provide every Indian with a unique identity card. Considering the success of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the Indian National Congress promised to continue with the scheme and guarantee 100 days work and increase wage to Rs.100 a day for every one falling under the Act. The Congress party by

drawing example from the NREGA scheme pledged to enact a Right to Food law that will guarantee access to sufficient food for all people and 25 Kilogram of rice or wheat per month at 3 per kg for people living below the line of poverty. For the rural poor the Congress in the 2009 manifesto further promised to provide health security for all and cover every family living below the poverty line by the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, etc (AICC, 2009, pp.13-29).

Hence, many such grassroots issues which found space in 2004 manifesto and were implemented during 2004-2009 tenure of Congress-led UPA government was again incorporated in the 2009 manifesto with additional provisions and facilities. Apart from sound economic policies, prospective electoral promises correct political maneuvering is also required. It was Sonia Gandhi who had earlier saved the Congress from slipping down into a complete oblivion and then after 11 years it was her son Rahul Gandhi who emerged as the star campaigner for the party with the election of 2009. The Congress general secretary had covered 230 constituencies and had held extensive rallies to revive the lost bases of the Congress. He campaigned extensively for reviving the lost bases in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Gujarat. Restructuring the party structure and introduction of inner democracy in the youth wings of the Congress yielded dividends for the party.

Thus the general election to the 15th Lok Sabha held during April-May 2009 saw a comprehensive victory for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) with Congress as its leading partner. In fact, it was for the first time in the last twenty five years a government that has completed its full term got re-elected. Besides, for the first time there was a change in equation within the system of coalitional form of government. The return of the ruling UPA to office in 2009 was due to the resounding popular mandate which reflect a distinct undercurrent support for it. Even though there was no "wave" as such in the country against or in favour of any particular party but certainly there was a subdued and invisible "surge" and support for the Congress Party.

Congress for the first time since 1991 was able to cross the two hundred mark and secured 206 seats out of the 440 seats that it had contested for, polling 28.56 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in). The UPA comprised of Trinamool Congress, NCP, DMK, the National Conference, the JMM, VCK, RPI, MUL, IND (Congress), KCM apart from the Indian National Congress. The UPA captured 262 seats, just 11 seats short of absolute majority polling 36.46 percent of votes. With the 2009 Lok Sabha election the UPA was able to secure some 86 more seats than it had secured in the 2004 election

(Rai, 2009, p.203). NDA stood distant second with 159 seats. BJP secured only 116 seats with 18.80 percent of votes (www.eci.nic.in). The Third Front could bag just 80 seats. The Fourth Front (which was formed suddenly prior to the election) could manage to score just 27 seats. The Indian National (INC) was also seen to have played a more assertive role as a coalitional maker, having more control over the bargaining process during the formation of the government for 2009-2014.

One of the significant features of this election was the comeback of the Congress party in the state of Uttar Pradesh where it had secured 21 seats, two sets less than the Samajwadi Party and one seat more than the BSP.[9] The Congress decided to fight the general election alone after the Samajwadi Party refused to allay with it. A large segment of the Muslims voted for Congress this time across the state. Even a substantial chunk of Brahmins, Dalit and extremely Backward Caste communities in select constituencies voted in favour of the party which contributed towards its revival in the state. The high pitched campaign by Rahul Gandhi and his initiative to run up the organization at the grassroots paid dividends for the party. The Indian National Congress performed well in almost all the states. It performed well in Rajasthan, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Mizoram, Manipur, Delhi, Chandigarh, Punjab, Uttarakhand. It improved its performance in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, recovered its lost ground in West Bengal, Kerala, excelled with its allies in Maharashtra, regained its base in Andhra Pradesh and improved its position in Bihar.

Hence the bottom time of the general election 2009 was the "Resurgence of the Indian National Congress" because of its more responsible and pro-people appeal and also due to the complete rejection by the people of India of Bharatiya Janata Party's communal politics and Mandir-Masjid issue. The common people of India was also unable to grasp the intellectual projections made by the left despite of its efforts to make the 2004-2009 UPA government abide by the Common Minimum Programme.

The key to the success of the Congress party lies in its projection as an advocate of democratic socialism. The Congress led UPA government was able to abide by the Common Minimum Programme and accomplish substantially. Moreover, the NREGA, the flagship scheme of the party and the waiving of farm loan yielded positive results just as "Garibi Hatao" (Remove Poverty) slogan of Indira Gandhi did to Congress in 1971 to regain its lost status.[10] Congress was able to bag votes from the rural poor substantially, from the women population as well as from the people of Backward and tribal community. Its emphasis on egalitarianism and its

appealing slogan of "AAM ADMI" was acknowledged and rewarded accurately.

Moreover, a positive image of the Prime Minister and the Congress President was definitely and an added advantage for the party. A vacuum was created in the leadership position of the party which no one could fulfill. Besides, the party was able to keep its calm and adopt correct manners, strategies and make effective alliance partners which paid off manifold. Alliance with Trinamool Congress and DMK brought considerable success for the party in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. The Congress party did not grow over confident and on the contrary appeared more responsible. It was able to highlight a pro-people image and cut a niche in people's mind.

At the state level, the Congress improved its performance after the 2009 elections. With State Assembly Election, 2009 the state of Andhra Pradesh was seen to give Congress the mandate to rule the state. Chief Minister Y.S. Rajashekhara Reddy steered the Congress to victory in Andhra Pradesh. In both the election, Lok Sabha as well as State Assembly, the people of Andhra Pradesh voted in favour of the Congress. The congress won 33 out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats and won 157 out of 294 seats in 2009 Assembly election. There was no viable alternative for Congress in the state. Reddy had initiated many developmental and welfare programmes in the state which included a new irrigation project, provision of old age pensions, subsidized housing schemes, supply of rice at Rs. 2/- a kilogram to the poor, the novel health insurance scheme, 'Rajiv Arogyasri' ensured that the votes of Congress remained un-eroded. Caste factor played a very insignificant role in the election to the state this time. (Frontline, 2009, Vol. 20, Issue 11).

Haryana went for its assembly polls in October 13, 2009. The electorate of the state of Haryana gave a mixed verdict with no clear majority for any party. Although the ruling Congress remained the single largest party by winning 40 out of the 90 assembly seats. The Congress actually benefitted from fragmented opposition in the state (The Hindu, Oct. 23, 2009). The Indian National Congress was even able to sweep the polls in the state of Arunachal Pradesh with the Assembly polls for the year 2009. The Congress came to power for a second consecutive term under the stewardship of Dorjee Khandu. Out of the total 60 seats the Congress had bagged 42 seats. The performance of the party had in fact improved in the state as in the 2004 assembly polls the party had won 34 seats. (The Hindu, Oct. 23, 2009).

In the House of 288, the Congress party had secured 82 seats and was in the position to form the government with decade old ally NCP in Maharashtra

with the 2009 assembly polls. The ruling combine had in fact improved its performance in the state and returned to power for the third time consecutively. NCP bagged 62 seats in 2009. Congress had in fact improved its performance in the state as it secured 82 seats as against its 69 seats in 2005 assembly polls. The anti-establishment votes got divided between the Shiv Sena and the MNS and this produced a split verdict which led to the victory of the Congress–NCP led alliance. The Congress – NCP coalition came to power and touched the half way mark of 144 out of 288 assembly seats (The Hindu, Oct., 23, 2009).

Hence, all these indicate that the Congress has been able to rejuvenate itself from the state of decline and has been able to revive itself in lot many states either by improving its performance or by retaining its bases with the 14th and 15th polls. This clearly marks the 'resurgence' of the Congress party in the Indian political system.[11]

Notes

1 In fact the Congress suffered electoral reverses in many parts of the country like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. In these states, caste-based parties have made inroads. Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi party in Uttar Pradesh, the Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar to name some of them.

2 The Bahujan Samaj party, a dalit based party in Uttar Pradesh claimed itself to be the representative of the socially, economically and politically undermined Dalits.

3 Earlier the Congress party had reservations about accepting the coalitional form of politics.

4 It was put into operation during the Indira Gandhi era when the Indian Amy stormed inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar to fight some terrorists and also took into possession a hue pile of arms and ammunition. It is being said that it had hurt the religious sentiments of the Sikhs.

5 The 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' was launched to make the people aware about the weaknesses of the BJP- led NDA government and its inadequacies. To the Congress the BJP- led coalitional government was not able to achieve what it had promised.

6 Initially Mrs. Sonia Gandhi too was reluctant about joining politics but ultimately she accepted the position of the party President. Hence the Congress again had to settle for a dynastic succession.

7 Though it efforts was also made to establish contacts and communication with the women section of the population. They would unfold their grievances to their leader.

8 It was the three pronged approach of the Congress to reinvent itself actually paid dividends for the party which included reviewing emphasis on secularism, pluralism and composite nationhood and by enhancing the essence of democracy by ensuring well being for all sections of society (Hasan, 2007, p.92).

9 Many of them voted in favour of Congress and hence the UPA because of the waiver in farm loan and secondly for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. See Gupta, 'The Congress' Surprise in Uttar Pradesh' Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. XLIV, No. 22, May 30, 2009, p. 19.

10 NREGA has been a step to reach the poor. But it has been alleged that due to the implementation of the scheme through the bureaucracy the PRIs has been undermined and surpassed.

11 The word resurgence means rising or arising again; tending to rise again, Sykes, 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English', 1982, p.889.

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