CHAPTER – VII
CONCLUSIONS

In an independent country, especially a democratic one, political parties have become an integral part of modern politics as well as instruments of government making. The ideology and organizational structure of a political party are vital for its performance. All political parties have their constitutions which give in detail the organizational structure, the underlying ideology and the basic thrust of the parties. However in practice most of them do not adhere to what their Party constitutions proclaim. The parties bring out election manifestoes which make tall promises to the people but in reality the main purpose is to capture power. The parties in their propagandas generally declare to be truely secular parties and work for all sections of the society without any partial policies. In Punjab also the old established parties such as Congress and SAD give this type of commitments in their manifestoes. The Bahujan Samaj Party also has its Constitution in place and it declares its ideology as social transformation of the society so that the Dalits and other exploited sections of society can get equal rights. Thus its ideology and goals cater to only a segment of the population – the Dalits and other sections of the Backward Castes. The BSP proclaims to have carried forward the democratic revolution for
the Dalits and other lower castes. It has introduced political aspects into the ideology underlying the movement, which distinguished it from its predecessors. This has succeeded in removing the hold of Brahmanical ideology and the submissive attitude of the Dalits, providing them with a new confidence and self-respect.

The Bahujan Samaj Party is a party which is only three decades old. It did not emerge out of revolutionary struggles or movements. Its roots lay in a lower middle class ‘Trade Union’ organization of government employees, formed by Kanshi Ram the BAMCEF which was made up of the new, educated and better-off groups among the Dalits. It was only later, that its base was broadened by the formation of the DS-4. Later on Kanshi Ram transformed the DS-4 into a full-fledged political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, which was launched on Ambedkar’s birthday in 1984. The party proclaims to bring a social transformation providing social justice and upliftment of the Dalits. The Bahujan Samaj Party has been on the Indian political scene increasing its influence and becoming a force to reckon with at the national level and enjoying power in one of the most powerful states of India i.e. Uttar Pradesh, where the BSP under the leadership of Mayawati formed the government at its own in 2007.
BSP led activities began in Punjab in great earnest in late 1980’s and culminated in its participation in elections. Although today BSP has emerged as a national level player and formed a government in the most populated state of the country, but it could not perform well in Punjab politics. Its best electoral performance in Punjab was in 1992 when it got 9 seats in the Vidhan Sabha elections. However this performance cannot be a criteria to judge the political strength of the party as 1992 elections in Punjab were not normal elections. They were held under peculiar conditions under the shadow of guns. Most of the Akali sections had boycotted the elections. As far as BSP’s performance in Lok Sabha elections is concerned, again it was three years later in 1996 when it got three Lok Sabha seats with the alliance of SAD. In other elections its performance has been very poor in spite of the fact that Punjab has the highest proportion of Scheduled Castes in the country. The population of Scheduled castes in Punjab has also been growing at a rate that is much higher than the rest of the population. In 1971, the Scheduled Caste population in the state was 24.7 per cent. It went up to 26.9 percent in 1981 and further to 28.3 percent in 1991. However, in the following decade it grew at a slower rate and was 28.85 percent in 2001.

In the national politics and some states of the country especially in UP, BSP has created a strong hold but in Punjab it
has failed to make a mark although its founder Kanshi Ram belonged to Punjab. In the present study organization, support base and performance of the BSP various Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections have been analyzed.

As mentioned above the main purpose of the study was to find the performance of the BSP in Punjab politics and drawbacks of the party which are responsible for the poor performance of the party in Punjab. It may be stated that not much written information was available about the party at its party headquarters or its district level offices. Most of the information was collected through the personal interviews with 500 respondents. 150 respondents were the leaders and workers of the BSP and 350 were the common voters from the districts of Nawan Shahar and Hoshiarpur. Nawan Shahar district has the highest percentage of Dalit population (40.46 percent) and Hoshiarpur district has been the strong hold of the BSP. Thus the primary data was collected through field survey using questionnaire cum interview schedules prepared separately for the leaders and the common voters.

The study has tried to look into the organizational set up of the party in the state and how it has taken forward its ideology of social transformation and upliftment of the Dalits and other backward sections of the society. In addition to making an
appraisal of the party’s electoral performance an effort has been made to point out the problems and prospects faced by the party in Punjab.

**The Major Findings of the Study are as Follows:**

Although BSP is a National Political Party but it was found that the organizational structure of the BSP is very weak at the state level in Punjab. It is not a well-organized party. Most of the office bearers including State President, State Incharge and Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha Committee Incharges are handpicked by the part superemo Mayawati. Thus, contrary to the claims of the party constitution there is no inner democracy and no regular meetings of any organization are held. In fact, neither at the district level nor at the party headquarters at the state level there is any written information available. It was also found that there is a lack of coordination among the various organizational bodies of the party.

Most of the party workers and leaders had very poor knowledge about the organizational structure and the ideology of the party. In the decision making process also the party does not adopt the democratic way because all the decisions are taken by the National President and many of the workers did not know as to who was the main decision maker in the party.
Originally BSP is a caste based party as it has the Dalits as the target group. In Punjab the Dalit card of the party failed because caste system is not strong like other states of the country because of the influence of the Sikhism and Arya Samaj movement. Although Dalits in Punjab face discrimination on the basis of caste but it is not strong like other parts of the country. The Dalits of Punjab have representations in all the upper caste parties so most of the Dalits in Punjab have remained the vote bank of the major parties in the state i.e. Congress and SAD. Even in the Hoshiarpur and Nawan Shahar districts which are considered to be the main support base area of BSP, only around 11 percent of the common respondents reported to favour the BSP and the majority of them declared the Congress to be their favourite party. Out of these common masses very few named leaders of BSP as their favourite leaders. Out of the BSP leaders also Kanshi Ram was liked by more respondents than Mayawati.

The Bahujan Samaj Party under the leadership of Kanshi Ram and now Mayawati realized the drawback of sticking to the Dalit-card strategy. As in parliamentary democracy limited support base is not sufficient to give access to political power. The party succeeded in its social engineering experiment in UP. However in spite of the social engineering formula majority of the leaders in the party belong to the Dalit community. 80 percent
leadership of Punjab comes from Dalit community. It means it has not been able to implement this formula in Punjab in a proper way. The BSP’s Dalit tag is quite strong in Punjab. It is the general perceptions of the masses that BSP is a party of Dalits and the social engineering experiment of the BSP was found to be presently not working. However majority of party leaders and workers felt that it should be followed in Punjab.

It was also found that younger generation was getting less attracted to the party. Only 13.3 percent of the respondents in total 150 (workers and leaders) were found to be of younger age group. Other major parties of the state like Congress and SAD have greater hold among the youth and the BSP has not been able to mobilize the youth to join it.

Another factor which came to light during the field survey was that the number of leaders from other parties joining BSP was much lower than the number of BSP leaders joining other parties. Out of the total 150 sampled leaders around 16 percent were found to have come from other parties. From the other parties only those leaders join the BSP who face discrimination in their original party. They join the BSP not for the development of the party but for their personal interests. If the BSP gives them a chance of contesting the election they join the party. They work as a spoilsport of those parties which they have left
but after some time especially after the defeat in the elections they again leave BSP. This has been happening in the party again and again. For example during the 2004 Lok Sabha elections out of the 13 candidates who contested the elections 10 candidates left the party after their defeat. This trend discourages the old dedicated workers of the party.

The role of the education is very important to create the qualities of leadership but the leadership of the party in Punjab is not well educated. Approximately 70 percent leaders’ educational qualification was up to 10+2 level. Due to the lack of able leadership BSP has not been able to spread the ideology of the party in Punjab. It was observed during the survey that majority of the leaders, who claimed to be active in BSP did not have basic knowledge about the BSP. Although 80 percent leaders of the party reported that they joined this party because they liked the ideology of the party but they were not able to explain the policies and programmes of the party. It was found during the field survey that there was a lack of proper coordination between the leadership of BSP and the Dalit voters the main support base of the party. It was found that not only the party was not able to widen its support base among the other sections even the Dalits were drifting away from the party.

Kanshi Ram still remains the most liked leader. It was revealed during the study that 54 percent workers of the party
rated Kanshi Ram as the ideal leader. Around 7 percent workers and leaders of Punjab unit of the party favoured Mayawati the National President of the party. It means majority of the leadership of the party in Punjab were not satisfied with the style of functioning of its Party President. They alleged that after Kanshi Ram’s death it has become a one person party and many old workers of the party have left the BSP. Many complained that the main focus of the National Leadership of the party was on UP although its founder was from the state of Punjab.

If we analyse the Punjab politics since 1966 we find that Punjab politics revolves around two major parties the Congress and Akali Dal. All other political parties in Punjab including BSP play an effective role only if they contest the elections in alliance with any of these two major parties. However majority of the sampled workers and leaders were found to be opposing the idea of BSP forming alliance with either SAD or Congress. Their main argument was that alliance benefits the other party with which BSP makes alliance because whereas the BSP supporters vote for the other party the supporters of other party do not vote for BSP candidates. Only a small group of leaders was in favour of alliance.

In Punjab BSP is facing a problem of factionalism. A united BSP was able to create some hold in Punjab but after the
emergence of various factions in the party. BSP has lost its hold. Presently there are six factions of Bahujan Samaj Party. Out of these three factions are more active viz BSP, BSP(A) and DBSM and the votes of Dalits get further divided among these factions which has affected the overall performance of BSP.

BSP lacks sound programmes for the depressed sections of the society. The poor Dalit masses were found to be alleging that the BSP leaders indulge in amassing wealth and did not care for the interests of the poor. They were like any other party where the leaders come to the masses only for votes. Some of the respondents commented that as BSP was not a ruling party its leaders could not get their works done. That is one reason why they support those parties which formed the government so that they get material benefits from them.

Regarding the responses to the query about the poor performance of the party in Punjab the data reveals that workers and leaders of the BSP did not have common views. They gave many reasons for the poor performance of the party like lack of Dalit consciousness, lack of able leadership, weak organization of the party, party high command’s concentration on UP etc.

About the future of the BSP in Punjab the sampled workers and leaders of the party were found to be optimistic. Majority of the party leaders were of the view that in future BSP will
dominate in Punjab politics. But for this the party must focus on Sarav Samaj. About the experiment of social engineering the majority of sampled workers and leaders favoured the idea of Upper Castes joining BSP but most of them were unaware of the term “Social Engineering” as such.

As far as the socio-economic profile of the 350 common voters, largely belonging to the SCs and BCs from two districts of Nawan Shahar and Hoshiarpur is concerned it was seen that majority of them could be classified as belonging to very low or low income groups, with low level of educational background and mostly belonging to Sikh religion and having a poor understanding of political problems. Most of them were engaged in either labour activities or some other low income generating occupations.

It was interesting to note that Congress was favoured by more respondents, followed by Akali Dal. BSP was the favourite party of only around 11 percent respondents. Most of the respondents had low level of knowledge about the ideology and the policies of the BSP.

A substantial percentage of common voters opined that BSP is a party of only the Dalits but a large section did not agree that it was a party looking after the poor. They did not find any difference in BSP and other parties as none cared for the poor.
When some other political questions were asked, it was found that most of them avoided answering them or they did not know the answer. Still many thought that BSP should work for the poor people and BSP should work in co-operation with other parties particularly the Congress. Most of them did not have any idea about the causes of poor performance of BSP or the issue of Social engineering.

Thus the Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab faces many problems. Some of these are: the weak organizational structure, the lack of able leadership, the absence of co-ordination among the various organizations of the party, the failure of the party leadership to focus on regional and specific socio-cultural issues, wide spread factionalism and the absence of dedicated party workers who could genuinely identify with the poor sections of the society. If the party has to emerge as a potential political player in Punjab it need to focus on the following issues.

First and foremost the organizational structure of the party must be overhauled. Inner party democracy is very important. Thus the party need to decentralize and the workers who are attached to the roots must be given opportunity to give proper feed back to the top leadership.

If National leadership of the BSP concentrates on Punjab and the state leadership works in coordination with it only then
the image of the party will improve in the minds of common masses and workers of the party. Unless and until the grass root level leaders are given due importance they will not work with enthusiasm.

Further the party must mobilize the masses and undertake recruitment drive. The youth must be sensitized and mobilized to join BSP.

As the Dalit card has not worked, the party seriously needs to reform its strategies to sincerely work for all sections of society. Although BSP does talk about the ‘Sarv Samaj’ but it has a tag of Dalit party. It is the need of the time that BSP convinces the upper caste people that this party is a party of all and not only of the Dalits.

BSP is already working on the concept of Social Engineering and Punjab leadership also wants to implement this formula in the state, it must do it in a systematic method otherwise it cannot succeed in Punjab because the situation of Punjab is totally different from other states.

If BSP wants to create a hold in Punjab then it is compulsory for it to give sound programmes not only for the depressed sections but for every section of the society. If it gives some sound programme and its leaders sincerely work in their
areas for the welfare of the people it can hope to get support from the masses.

Factionalism within the party must be checked. For this it is very important that the party high command takes interest in the affairs of the party and gives due credit to the real workers of the party. There is a need for better co-ordination among the various organizational units of the party in the state and national leadership.

Although majority of the leadership of Punjab unit is against any alliance but in Punjab without alliance performance of the party cannot be improved. The party must seriously chalk out its alliance strategy. As Akali Dal has an alliance with BJP, for BSP Congress can be a better choice for alliance.

The need of the hour is that BSP should create able leadership in Punjab. After the poor performance of the 2009 Lok Sabha elections most of the party workers blamed Mr. Karimpuri’s style of functioning. At Present, Mr. Karimpuri is considered as stalwart leader of BSP in Punjab. But most of the workers are not satisfied with the state President. The party must adopt the democratic method of electing its leadership.

Lastly the political strategies should be framed by the party leadership keeping in mind the socio-political conditions of Punjab. If a policy succeeds in any other state it is not necessary that it would succeed in Punjab also. The BSP leadership must
reorient its policies and programmes in tune with the socio-economic-political environment of the state.

To sum up it may be said that there are many problems and challenges before the BSP in Punjab. Without systematic organization and sound political strategies it cannot make a strong hold in Punjab. Although today BSP has become a strong political force in some states in India but the situation of Punjab is different. If BSP seriously focuses on its drawbacks and lapses then it can improve its position in Punjab politics otherwise it has a bleak future.