BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY IN PUNJAB: ORGANIZATION, SUPPORTBASE AND PERFORMANCE

ABSTRACT

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Present research was an effort to know the genesis and the growth of Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab. The study also tried to find out the reasons as to why it could not emerge as a strong political party as in other states like UP. The study was mainly empirical and was based upon primary as well as secondary sources of information. As not much written information was available all the basic information has been collected through personal interviews, observations and visits to the party offices at the district and state level. In addition, a total sample of 500 respondents was selected on the basis of purposive as well as random sampling technique. Both the leaders and supporters of the party as well as common voters were interviewed. Out of these 500 respondents 150 were the leaders and workers of the BSP from all over the Punjab and 350 were the common voters from Nawan Shahar and Hoshiarpur districts. These districts were selected because Nawan Shahar district has the highest percentage of Dalit population (40.46 per cent as per population census of India 2001) and Hoshiarpur district has been the stronghold of the BSP.

The major findings of the study are as under: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab faces many problems like: 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.

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.