CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

Modern era is a democratic era. For democracy political parties are very essential. A democratic government can not function without the presence of political parties. Without political parties, we cannot think of democracy. Political parties can also exist and develop only in a democratic state. In any Parliamentary democracy, the political parties are the primary ingredients. The effective working of the party system in general and the political parties in particular make a democracy operational and vibrant. The political parties basically aim at capturing power. This objective of capturing differentiates the political parties from other socio-political groups. So, it is but natural that in many of the constitutions as prevalent in the different countries of the world, no statutory recognition has been given to the political parties except in communist countries. In Indian constitution also there is no direct reference of political parties.1

To have a proper understanding of the working of political system, the study of political parties is of paramount importance. The political parties reflect the society in miniature. A political party is a social group, a system of meaningful and
patterned activity within the larger society. It is both a social organization and a decision making system.²

The term “political parties” emerged in the nineteenth century with the development of representative institutions and the expansion of the suffrage in Europe and the United States. It designated organizations whose goal was the capture of public office in electoral competition with one or more other parties. Subsequently the term “party” was extended to include political organizations not engaged in electoral competition: minor parties which had no realistic exceptions of gaining office through appeals to the electorate, revolutionary organizations seeking to abolish competitive elections, and the growing groups in totalitarian states.³

Historically, there were two phases in the development of political parties. Originally they emerged within the parliaments of the first democracies as groups of independently elected representatives who needed to find ways of cooperating in passing legislation. These were caucus loose organizations of like minded representatives. Then later parties became involved in the process of trying to structure the vote in popular elections.

Modern political parties are protean organizations which perform an extremely wide range of functions in the pursuit of political power. Ware has provided the following definition ‘A
A political party is an institution that (a) seeks influence in a state often by attempting to occupy positions in government and (b) usually consists of more than a single interest in the society and so to some degree attempts to “aggregate interest.”

According to the dictionary of politics “A political party is an organized group of people sharing common policy preferences and usually a general ideological position. Simply to have such a common view does not make the group a party—it is necessary also that it seeks, or has political power.”

Political parties have become an important feature of modern politics. Despite their undemocratic internal character, political parties have come to occupy significant place in all types of modern societies. In independent societies, political parties have become instruments of government-making. Otto Kirchheimer says, “parties have functioned as channels for integrating individuals and groups into the existing political order, or as instruments for modifying or altogether replacing that order (integration-disintegration). Parties have attempted to determine political action preferences and influence other participants in the political process into accepting them. Parties have nominated public officeholders and presented them to public at large for confirmation.”
A primary function of parties is to organize public opinion and test attitudes and to transmit these to government officials and leaders so that the ruled and rulers, public and government, are in reasonable close accord. Political party’s form is determined by the entire socio-political frame work of the society. Society and government depend on party organization, the decisions of party leader and framework of party impose on society.\(^7\)

Political parties make use of all the agencies of public opinion to win the support of the people to capture political power in a state. In a democratic system political parties compete with one another to acquire power for the fulfilment of their political aspirations and for bringing transformation in the society in consonance with the aspirations of the people.\(^8\)

In appearance, every political party is an integrated whole but if we study the inner functioning of the party, we find that, to a great extent, it revolves around the factions within the party. The existence of such factions is a universal phenomenon which is observed in every social setting as varied as peasant village, rural and tribal communities, labour unions, political parties, religious groups and cooperative organizations. They prevail everywhere and in all the parties and have become indispensable elements of politics because politics is the perennial pursuit of
power. Those in the business of politics – parties or persons are always trying to get power or to retain or augment power. Political power may be sought for its own sake or to do good to the people or to secure benefits for one’s caste, community, faction, party, family or self.\(^9\)

In any election apparently it is the individual voter who actually castes the vote in the exercise of his franchise. Political parties play the crucial role in the electoral process. Political parties represent sets of package of responses to the diverse issues of national and local importance that may concern the voter. This simplifies the voting decision for the common citizen, since instead of having to find out the views of the individual on diverse issues all that the voter has to do is to know as to which political party the candidate belongs. Party system provides the basic framework for electoral analysis.\(^10\)

The electoral system is only one factor in the evolution of a party system, but the effects of different electoral systems can be found in the structure, ideology, the pattern of party interaction and in the number of parties that compete in the political system. An electoral system consists of more than the methods of counting the votes cast by the voters. A full description on an electoral system would include such factors as the extent of the franchise i.e. who is entitled to vote. It would include the rules
relating to candidates and parties and those regulating the administration of elections, especially the provisions against competition. The method of casting the vote is the secret ballot as part of electoral system.\textsuperscript{11}

Political parties provide leadership and direction without which the “power of the people” would remain ineffective. Despite the fact that parties and their activities are subject to much criticism and abuse, they are essential to the operation of democratic government. Without them, as Maclver says, “there can be no regular resort to the constitutional device of parliamentary elections nor of course any of the recognized institutions by means of which a party seeks to gain or to maintain power.”\textsuperscript{12}

To fulfill their aims of achieving power or of preventing others from coming to power, political parties typically build large apparatuses with ramifications throughout the country; they adopt programmes which they propose to or press on the population; and they recruit future generations of politicians.\textsuperscript{13}

The party system in India originated in the colonial era in 1885, with the formation of National Indian Congress in Bombay. However, in the initial years Congress was not a mass organization. It was mainly created to fulfil the interests of educated classes. Congress should be called as the mother of all
parties in India because most of the parties have their origin in it.\textsuperscript{14}

Today India has a multiparty system. In India there are two types of political parties some are regional political parties while others are National political parties. Bahujan Samaj party is one among them. Bahujan Samaj party became a national political party on November 25, 1997.

The Bahujan Samaj Party has its roots in All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) a non political organization floated by Kanshi Ram on December 6, 1978. The BAMCEF was an organization of educated employees of oppressed and exploited communities amongst Indian society. Three years after he floated BAMCEF, Kanshi Ram set up the DS-4 (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sanghrash Samiti) on December 06, 1981. The DS-4 was initially conceived as a non political body, but in 1982, 46 candidates of DS-4 contested the elections of the Haryana Assembly.

Having gained political experience and using the BAMCEF and the DS-4 as base organizations Kanshi Ram formally established a political party in Lucknow called Bahujan Samaj party on April 14, 1984 on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Jayanti.

The Bahujan Samaj party is the self appointed representative of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and
other backward communities. It has introduced some radical aspects into the ideology underlying the Dalit movement in India.

Main ideology of the Bahujan Samaj Party is Ambedkarism. The party has been working for social transformation and economic emancipation of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes. The party aims to establish the Sarvsamaj/Bahujan Samaj. The party vehemently criticizes the Brahminism or Manuvadi system of society.

Having established its roots in UP, the party attempted to spread in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. The influence of Bahujan Samaj party has been increasing day by day and year by year at the national level. In 1993, in UP Assembly elections Bahujan Samaj Party and SP alliance secured majority and formed their government. Later on Bahujan Samaj Party formed the government with BJP’s support under the Chief Ministership of Mayawati. Even now the BSP is the ruling party in UP under the chief membership of Mayawati.

In Punjab, the influence of the Bahujan Samaj Party as a political force was felt during the February 1992, Assembly elections when the Bahujan Samaj Party emerged as the main opposition party when most of the Akali sections boycotted the said polls. It won nine assembly seats. But after that it could not
repeat the performance and its performance has been very poor in the last elections.

In the absence of any major electoral triumph, there are many who characterize the Bahujan Samaj Party as a nuisance factor in Indian politics for the foreseeable future. However, this is not the correct observation and the party is gradually becoming a force to reckon with at the national level. Keeping in view the emergence of coalitional governments at the national level as well as in many states the Bahujan Samaj Party does need to be looked at more seriously. In Punjab if the Bahujan Samaj Party can have alliance with one of the major parties it can gain tremendously.

Thus, it can be stated that there is a need to study and understand the dynamics of Bahujan Samaj Party and its working in Punjab where the proportion of Scheduled Caste population is highest in the country. It is to be seen how much support base Bahujan Samaj Party has among the Scheduled Caste population and other sections of the society.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Before delineating the exact research problem dealt with in the present study, it is important to review the existing literature. A brief review of the existing literature is given below:
Sudha Pai in her book, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh* examines the emergence, ideology and programmes, mobilization strategies and electoral progress of the Bahujan Samaj Party, against the backdrop of the phenomenon of Dalit assertion, both historically, and particularly, the strong wave witnessed in recent years, which has taken two forms: electoral and grassroot activism. While highlighting its considerable achievements, the study explores the reasons for the failure of the Bahujan Samaj Party to harness the rising wave of Dalit assertion, evident in UP society today. It examines how empowering the BSP experience has actually been for the vast majority of subaltern Dalits. It provides an understanding of the impact of the BSP, on both UP and Indian politics.

**Varinder Arora and Rajan Arora (ed.) India fifty years of Independence 1947-97**
deals with Indian politics since 1947 to 1997. It is a collection of articles by eminent scholars. In this book Farhat Parveen’s article on the rise of Bahujan Samaj party is devoted to the evolution and electoral performance of the Bahujan Samaj Party in the contemporary political process of India. In 1992 in Punjab Assembly elections Bahujan Samaj Party emerged as the main opposition party. In 1993 Bahujan Samaj Party won 67 Assembly seats in UP and became a coalition partner in the Samajwadi Party Government.

**Paramjit Singh Judge and Satish K. Sharma (ed.)**

*Dimensions of Social Change* consists of the contribution of various scholars. Articles of this book deal with unique aspects of the social change with a comprehensive understanding of India’s social structure. In this book Paramjit Singh judge’s article “Green Revolution and the Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab” is devoted to the castism, profession, the impact of the green revolution and the Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab. This is a survey based study. At the local level economic dependence plays an important role in creating political subservience. The rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party is linked with improvement in the economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes, particularly the chamar/Addharmi caste. In the context of Punjab, the
Bahujan Samaj Party seems to be providing the plateform for articulating the aspirations of the emerging elites in the chamar caste, opines the scholar.

**Yagati Chinna Rao** (ed) *Dividing Dalits: Writings on Sub Categorization of Scheduled Castes*,\(^{19}\) provides a comprehensive study about the issues of sub-categorization of Scheduled Castes. It puts together a total of thirteen essays of eminent scholars. Caste, as a category, has played an important role in the analysis of Indian politics. While in the socio-political realm, it has remained for long a very crucial source of collective identity; in the contemporary discourse when India is transforming itself into a modern society, it is the sub-caste that has acquired priority over the broader category of caste in Indian politics. It is an attempt to trace the shift in the collective consciousness of Dalits in India. This discourse on classification and caste divisions examines the reasons of emergence of sub-classification beginning with the case of Punjab. Recognizing the complexity and sensitivity of the issues, this book strikes a balance between guarded political commentary and critical analysis of the heterogeneous voices that have surfaced.

**Andre Beteille** *Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*,\(^{20}\) is a survey based study of South India’s village. According to the author caste, class and
power are closely inter-woven. They can be treated separately, and particularly the last two, only by a process of abstraction. The caste system enjoyed both legal and religious sanctions in traditional Indian society. Different castes were assigned different rights, not only in economic matters, but over a wide range of social phenomenon, today; there is a certain amount of divergence between the hierarchy of caste and that of class. Both the systems have been undergoing some modification, the caste system because of the general trend towards westernization and secularization. Although relations between classes have been undergoing change, this change has not kept pace with changes in the distribution of power.

Susan Bayly’s Caste, Society and Politics in India,\textsuperscript{21} is an effort to interpret the phenomenon of caste in the Indian subcontinent. The period of this study is from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day. This study argues that caste has been for many centuries a real and active part of Indian life. The norms and conventions of caste have had a pervasive presence in the historical literature and even today caste has continued to be a major theme in Indian political debate. This study has argued that caste is the only or even the most important element of Indian life, let alone that caste as a ‘system’ has been the immutable core of Indian civilization since ancient times.
Paramjit S. Judge and Gurpreet Bal, *Mapping Dalits: Contemporary Reality and Future Prospects in Punjab*, is an empirical study which examines, evaluates and interrogates the changing status of the Dalits in Punjab by taking into consideration four variables, namely, education and occupation, empowerment, entrepreneurship and emigration. There are caste divisions among the Scheduled Castes and the emergence of economic inequality within castes has come out sharply. There is a change in the educational levels of Dalits across generations. It is interesting to note that the occupational diversity is not a direct result of educational mobility; rather, the changes in the Punjabi society have given rise to occupational diversification. It highlights that the living standard of the Urban Dalits is much better than the rural Dalits and international migration is the unique feature of the Dalits of Punjab. No other state has as many Dalits in the Indian diaspora as Punjab has.

Suviira Jaiswal, *Caste: Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change*, begins with a critique of the current theories of caste system. The work examines the historical specificities which led to the emergence of the varnas and their crystallization into castes. The morphology of caste is the result of the changes the institution has undergone over centuries of its existence, but its origins are embedded in the ecology of the Vedic cattle-keepers.
Processes of patriarchy and state formation have played a crucial role in its evolution and its ideology has made significant conceptual adjustments in the course of its long history without however, abandoning its basic principles. Finally, it points to the role of caste in providing ‘unity in diversity’ and limiting the impact of social movements such as the Arya Samaj.

**K.C.Das** *Indian Dalits: Voices, Visions and Politics,* is an analytical study of socio-political and cultural consciousness of Indian Dalit community. Dalit consciousness is a reflection of the troubled socio-cultural relationship in Hindu Caste hierarchy. Author examines the role of Ambedkar, Gandhi and Dalit movements in the eradication of untouchability. He also highlights the role of the Kanshi Ram and the BSP to create the consciousness among the Indian Dalits in the contemporary India. Today Dalit politics under the leadership of BSP is at crossroads. BSP has constructed a strong Dalit movement based upon identity and consciousness in a state like UP which still has a rigid and conservative social structure.

**Kanchan Chandra’s** *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India,* develops a theory explaining when and why voters and elites in patronage democracies privilege ethnic identities in their vote-giving and vote-seeking strategies. The focus of this study is on the
Bahujan Samaj Party during the years of 1984-1998. Author describes that BSP as a multiethnic rather than an ethnic party on the grounds that it brings together several individual castes within the category Scheduled Castes, such as Chamars, Balmikies etc and analyses the role of the BSP in various elections especially in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. According to the author between 1984 and 1998, Scheduled Caste voters preferred the BSP than the other parties in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh because the BSP had a monopoly on the representation of Scheduled Caste elites.

Ramesh Kumar in his book, Congress and Congressism in Indian Politics, examines the Indian party system in general and Congress party in particular. The constant shift of the Congress from right to left and vice versa is evident from the study of its policies and programmes formulated from time to time. Besides, the work makes a comprehensive analysis of electoral performance of all the political parties from 1950s to 1990s.

Pratap Chandra Swain's Bhartiya Janata Party: Profile and Performance, is an analysis of the genesis, nature and working of the Bhartiya Janata Party in Indian politics within the framework of newly emerging trends of Indian politics. Author also examines the role of other political parties in Indian politics in general.
Kishalay Banerjee, in his book, *Regional Political Parties in India*, highlights the conditions in which the regional political parties developed and functioned. This work is an attempt to make an analysis of the regional political parties in India in general and in Orissa in particular.

**ARTICLES**

A.K. Verma’s article *BSP’s Strategy in Uttar Pradesh: Wooing the Brahmins for a New Alliance*, is devoted to the BSP’s election strategy for the Assembly elections of 2006 in UP. The party was going all out to woo the Brahmins by holding a series of ‘Brahmin Jodo Samelans’ in the state. These samelans were only for the Brahmins at which the Dalits were not admitted. The main thrust of these samelans were conceived that the Bahujan Samaj Party is not anti Brahmin and the party wanted to build up an upper caste-Dalit-Muslim combine that enabled the Congress to rule for several decades. The Bahujan Samaj Party decided to set up ‘Bhaichara Samitis’ in all Assembly constituencies with Brahmins as the President and the vice president and a Dalit as a secretary.

Pradeep Kumar in his article, *Dalits and the BSP in Uttar Pradesh: Issues and Challenges*, clarifies the term Dalit and describes the rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party. This party originally claimed to mobilize the Dalits and minorities. In 1989
Lok Sabha elections the party won three Lok Sabha seats and emerged as the sixth all India party in terms of votes polled. In 1997 it became a National political party. In UP, BSP has almost monopolized the dalit votes in general and the chamar votes in particular. He analyses the reasons of the decline of the support base of the Bahujan Samaj Party in UP during the Lok Sabha elections 1996 and 1998.

**P. Muthaiah’s** article *Politics of Dalit Identity*\(^3^1\) is devoted to the study of designation of Dalits in different contexts of their designation impregnant with politics of designation and designates. Kanshi Ram launched Bahujan Samaj Party in the context of growing aspirations among SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities for proportional share in various fields. The Bahujan Samaj Party gave a new hope to SCs, STs and OBCs. It made a beginning for reduction of upper caste hegemony in Indian politics.

**Ashutosh Kumar’s** article *Punjab: In Search of New Leadership*\(^3^2\) is an important survey based study on the 13\(^{th}\) and 14\(^{th}\) Lok Sabha elections and 2002 Punjab Assembly Elections. In this study the author describes the reasons which were responsible for the defeat of Congress (I) in the 14\(^{th}\) Lok Sabha elections in Punjab, inspite of the Congress government in Punjab. On the other side he describes the reasons of poor
performance of Bahujan Samaj Party in the 1999 and 2004 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab. According to the author the division of Bahujan Samaj Party into three groups is the main factor responsible for the poor performance of Bahujan Samaj Party. In 2004 Lok Sabha elections if BSP had an alliance with Congress it would definitely have won some seats in Punjab, opines the author.

**Sudha Pai** in her article *Elections 1999 : Uttar Pradesh : BSPs New Electoral Strategy Pays Off* describes the improvement in the seat and vote share of the Bahujan Samaj Party in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections in UP. She analyses the factors which were responsible for the success of Bahujan Samaj Party. According to the author Mayawati’s campaign in all the constituencies was the main factor of the Bahujan Samaj Party’s success, on the other side Congress had no organizational strength and had to depend solely upon charisma and dynasty.

**Sudha Pai’s** another article *BSP’s Prospects in the Assembly Elections* is an attempt to present the prospects of the Bahujan Samaj Party in three states: M.P. Rajasthan and National Capital territory of Delhi before the 2003 Assembly elections. She commented on its future position in National politics and the role of the swabhiman rallies, which were held by the Bahujan Samaj Party leadership to create awareness and increase the party’s base among dalits.
Vivek Kumar in his article *BSP and Dalit Aspirations*,\(^\text{35}\) describes that Bahujan Samaj Party’s emergence as the first Dalit political party. Bahujan Samaj Party created aspirations among Dalits at the grass-root level for capturing political power. According to the author, after the establishment of Bahujan Samaj Party, Dalits moved from the margins to mainstream and the Bahujan Samaj Party started spreading slowly but surely in every corner of the country. At the end the author observes that if Bahujan Samaj Party had played any role in the government at the Centre in the 14\(^{\text{th}}\) Lok Sabha elections it would have been the chamelization of dalit aspirations from local to national level.

Jagpal Singh in his article *Dalits in Haryana Politics*,\(^\text{36}\) wrote about the series of rallies which were held by the BSP in Haryana. At the Faridabad rally on October 12, 1997, Kanshi Ram declared for the first time his party’s objective to expand the base of the Bahujan Samaj Party into Haryana. He mentioned that Bahujan Samaj Party was the first political party which mobilized as a distinct political group in Haryana. The author described the reasons of the defeat of the BSP in the 1996 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Haryana and made a prediction about the future of BSP. According to the author if BSP enters into alliance with the HVP, or HLD it can make a dent in Haryana.
Ashutosh Kumar and Sanjay Kumar in *Punjab Elections: Decline of Identity Politics*37, provides an analysis of the electoral outcome and the factors which are responsible for the paradigmatic shift in Punjab politics. The authors also examine the reasons behind the defeat of Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) and victory of Indian National Congress Party in 2002 Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections.

Surinder S. Jodhka’s *Return of the Region: Identities and Electoral Politics in Punjab*38, is devoted to the critical analysis of the Punjab politics from 1980-2004 and also highlights the various election results scenario. Author examines the rise of the Khalistan movement in Punjab and its impact on the Punjab politics especially on the various Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.

Paramjit S. Judge’s *Caste Conflicts in Punjab: An Examination of Recent Jat-Dalit Clash in a Village,*39 focuses on the Jat-Dalit clash in Talhan village in Jalandhar district. The proportion (30 percent) of the Scheduled Castes in the total population of Punjab is the highest among all the states in the country. In the Doaba region the number of Scheduled Castes is considerably high in comparison with the other regions. Author examines the reasons of the clash between the Jats and Dalits which took place on the issue of Gurudwara management and
the role of political parties in this conflict especially the SAD, Congress and the BSP.

**P.S. Verma’s** *Punjab Assembly Elections: Sharply Polarised Electorate*, analyses the electoral outcome of the Punjab Assembly Elections 2002, through the analysis of comparative electoral performance of Congress(I) and the Shiromani Akali Dal(Badal). The author observes that in this Assembly elections, the polarization of voters between the Congress and Akali Dal(Badal) was so sharp that the other parties and groups, including the allies of the two, failed to make their presence.

**Anne Vaugier Chatterjee’s** *Strains on Punjab Governance: An Assessment of the Badal Government (1997-1999)*, seeks to assess the two-year rule of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The Author examines the political strategies of SAD, in particular the rationale of its alliance with the BJP and also factionalism in the SAD, and relationship between religion and politics. Economic agendas of SAD and its electoral strategies are also discussed in this study.

**Ashutosh Kumar’s** article *Punjab Elections: Exploring the Verdict*, is the study of the electoral outcome of the 2007 Assembly Elections. Author describes that in the absence of credible third force in the state there was a close fight between the two traditional rivals namely the Congress and the
Shiromani Akali Dal. In this election there was 76 percent turnout which was high even by previous Punjab standards. He also highlights the factors which were responsible for the defeat of the Congress party and played a role for the victory of SAD-BJP alliance.

**Anand Teltumbde** in *An Enigma Called Kanshi Ram*,\(^{43}\) observes that Kanshi Ram emerged as the biggest and most creative leader in the post Ambedkar Dalit movement. After the brief life sketch of Kanshi Ram, the author highlights those organizations (BAMCEF, DS-4, BSP) which were established by the Kanshi Ram for the development of depressed sections of the society. He also examines the role of the BSP in UP politics especially during the elections of 1993, to 2002.

**Anand Teltumbde**'s *A Mayawï Revolution*,\(^{44}\) highlights the facts which led to the victory of Bahujan Samaj Party in the Assembly elections of 2007 in Uttar Pradesh. The strategies of Mayawati are also discussed. According to this study the victory of BSP is not a victory of bahujans but of sarvajans, because in this elections BSP adopted the Social Engineering formula and gave the tickets to many upper caste people.

**Meeta and Rajivlochan**, *Caste and Religion in Punjab: Case of the Bhaniarawala Phenomenon*,\(^{45}\) make an effort to analyses the influence of caste and religion on the politics of
Punjab. The focus of this study is on the controversy of various Sikh organizations with Dera Sacha Sauda and Bhaniarawala. It also highlights how during the time of elections political parties contact the deras to get the support of dera followers. He concludes that the impact of these deras can be seen during the election results.

Harish S Wankhede in his article The Political and the Social Movement Today,\textsuperscript{46} describes the role of the Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram and the Dalit organizations in the upliftment of depressed sections of the society. He also analyses the role of the BSP in Indian politics especially the factors which were responsible for the victory of the party in the Vidhan Sabha elections 2007 in UP and the limitation of the BSP as a social movement.

S.M.Dahiwale’s The political Mobilization of Backward Classes in India: An Overview,\textsuperscript{47} deals with the nature of social movements of the deprived sections of society and the role of the caste in Indian society. The political mobilization of the backward classes is basically against the Brahminism. The larger objective of these movements according to the author was to transform the Indian hierarchical society into a society based on equality. In this study the main focus of the writer is to highlight the contribution of different movements of backward
classes and his special attention has been to the Jyoti Rao Phooley, Ambedkar and the Kanshi Ram.

Sanjay Kumar in *Complete Erosion of Congress*,\(^4\) examines the Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections of 1997. Author analyses the reasons of the victory of SAD-BJP alliance and highlights the factors which became spoilsport for the Congress party. He also describes the tactical mistakes of the BSP in these elections.

Ashutosh Kumar and Sanjay Kumar in *The Recent Assembly Elections in Punjab: Some Reflections on Results and Changing Voter Preferences*,\(^5\) makes an investigation into the main trends of the 2002 Assembly elections in Punjab. As per the scholars, the paradigmatic shift in the Punjab politics continues with the decline of identity politics and primacy being accorded to good governance. Issues like corruption, overall crises in the economy in every field like agriculture, industry or trade became the spoilsport for the SAD-BJP combine. Other minor parties like BSP, NCP, and Panthic Morcha played the role of spoilers only.

Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshii’s *Electoral Politics in Post-Conflict Societies: Case of Punjab*,\(^6\) is a study of Punjab after the violence of 1980s. It deals with the electoral performance of political parties in the Punjab Assembly elections

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The above review very clearly shows that though a plethora of literature is available on Dalit issues and Bahujan Samaj party in India or in UP, no systematic research work has been done on the origin and growth of BSP and its performance in Punjab. Hence the present study has been undertaken so that this gap in knowledge may be fulfilled. The Bahujan Samaj Party has certain specific characteristics that distinguish it from broad based mainstream political parties such as the Congress. Its ideology and goals cater to only a segment of the population—the Dalits and sections of the Backward Castes.

Bahujan Samaj Party claims to be a party that wants to work within the system reforming it in the light of its own ideology and philosophy.

The topic “Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab: Organization, Support Base and Performance has been selected so that an objective analysis of party’s origin, growth, organizational structure and electoral performance in Punjab can be presented. This will help in pointing out the weaknesses in party’s organization and strategies particularly in Punjab.
Through the present research an effort is made to know the genesis and the growth of Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab. Apart from focusing on the ideology and support base of the party in Punjab, the performance of the party in the various Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections is scrutinized. The factionalism in the party and its other limitations are also discussed.

The study also tries to find out the reasons as to why it could not emerge as a strong political party as in other states like UP. It helps us to know the role of BSP to create consciousness among the Punjab Dalits. This study also helps to know the future of the Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab politics.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of this study are:

1. to examine the course of origin and growth of Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab;
2. to understand and analyse the ideology of the Bahujan Samaj Party as well as its programmes and policies particularly in Punjab;
3. to understand the strategies which the Bahujan Samaj Party has been following before, during and after elections including the alliances formed by it;
4. to analyse the performance of the Bahujan Samaj Party in various Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Punjab;
5. to examine the reasons because of which in spite of being a National political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party could not make a strong hold in Punjab and its electoral performance has been poor;

6. to study the problem of factionalism in Bahujan Samaj Party and how it affects the working of the party;

7. to study the leadership profile of the party in Punjab;

8. to understand the future prospects of Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab politics.

HYPOTHESES

The study was started with of the following hypotheses:

1. Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab lacks strong organizational structure.

2. The BSP has not been able to create a “Dalit consciousness” in Punjab.

3. The BSP has not been able to spread its influence among other backward castes.

4. The party lacks able leadership which is reflected in its organization and poor electoral performance.

5. The alliance strategy of the party in Punjab has been largely unfruitful.

6. Factionalism in the party is also contributing to poor performance of the party.
7. The party’s “social engineering” experiment is not going to work in Punjab.

METHODOLOGY

For the completion of a research work some methodology has to be adopted. Research depends upon the proper and particular methodology which is adopted for its completion.

This study is mainly empirical and is based upon primary as well as secondary sources of information. As not much written information is available regarding the party’s rise and growth in Punjab 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. For conducting interviews two separate questionnaires-cum interview schedules
(one for party leaders and one for voters) were prepared. They contained questions on socio-economic background of the respondents as well as questions to judge the political awareness of the respondents about the policies, programmes, problems and the future of the BSP in the state. Sufficient data were also collected from secondary sources like books, journals, pamphlets and periodicals including English and vernacular newspapers.

CHAPTERIZATION OF THE STUDY

The present research is a modest attempt to study and analyse the organization, support base, programmes and role of the Bahujan Samaj Party in the Punjab politics. The work is divided into seven chapters. The scheme of chapterisation is as follows:

1. Introduction: It is the first chapter of the study. This chapter consists of the significance and objectives of the study, review of literature and methodology of the study.

2. Origin of Dalit Organizations and the BSP: It provides a detailed analysis of the emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party in Indian politics as well as in Punjab. The factors which led to the formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party are also covered in this chapter. It gives a detailed description of the Dalit organizations formed before the formation of the BSP in 1984.
3. **Ideology and the Organizational Structure of the BSP:**
This chapter is devoted to the ideology and the organizational structure of the Bahujan Samaj Party at the national level as well as in Punjab.

4. **Electoral Performance and Support Base of BSP:** This chapter reviews the electoral performance of the party in various Parliamentary and Assembly elections and support base of the Bahujan Samaj Party in Punjab.

5. **Socio-Economic Profile and Perceptions of BSP Leaders and Voters:** This chapter is based on the survey conducted where primary data were collected from the leaders and workers of the party as well as the common voters. Their socio-economic profile and perceptions about various important political issues linked with the BSP are given.

6. **Problems and Prospects before BSP in Punjab:** The chapter focuses on the problems faced by BSP in Punjab. As BSP has been successful using first the Dalit card as an electoral strategy and of late the social engineering experiment in UP, the chapter assesses the use of these strategies in Punjab. It also highlights the prospects and challenges faced by the party in Punjab.

7. **Conclusions:** the main findings of the study are given in the last chapter. The chapter also includes a few suggestions which may help the BSP in improving its performance in Punjab.
REFERENCES


8 Subash C Kashyap, *op. cit*.

9 *Ibid*.


26 Ramesh Kumar, *op. cit.*


