INTRODUCTION

The party system is of the very essence of parliamentary democracy and no polity can be run on truly democratic lines without it. Political parties in a democratic set-up represent various interests and ideologies and give expression to both dissension and agreement within the body-politic. In fact in a well-run democracy political parties become institutionalised in due course as organs both of consent and dissent and represent as such the will of the people. In India the party system is still in a flux even forty years after the democratic experiment was started in 1947, and parties are still being formed and reformed and their affiliations are being aligned and realigned. Nevertheless certain big parties such as the Congress, the C.P.I., the C.P.I.(M), the Janta have acquired a permanent image and identity of their own and represent in themselves the party system of the country.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which has now changed its nomenclature to Bharatiya Janta Party (B.J.P.), is one such major party and the present study is concerned with the Punjab branch of this party right from its inception in 1951. Unlike many other political parties in India the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was neither an ideological nor an organizational offshoot of the Congress party. It came into being because it represented the cultural urges of certain sections of the Indian society and fulfilled some of the psychological aspirations of these sections. Because of these urges and aspirations the party went on increasing its
percentage of popular votes and in time came to be recognised as one of the major parties on the Indian political scene.

In the state of Punjab the Jana Sangh started gathering weight and importance right from its inception and has played a considerable part in its political history. But although the rise and growth of the Jana Sangh has been studied with its regional base at Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh the history of its development in Punjab has not been taken up in a detailed and thorough manner. Of course, some of the articles and books have touched upon the Bharatiya Jana Sangh's role in Punjab but a full investigation has so far not been done. Hence the writer was tempted to take up the study the "History of Bharatiya Jana Sangh in Punjab" for his doctoral thesis. In the following pages the author has tried his best to bring to light the role of the Jana Sangh in the shaping of Punjab politics.

The first chapter deals with the genesis of the Jana Sangh in the state of Punjab and the circumstances in which it came into being. In Punjab there was no effective, well organized and disciplined party that could represent all strata of society irrespective of differences of colour, creed or religion. No doubt, the Akali party was there but its appeal and ideology was confined to the Sikh population only. Other parties like the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Socialist party, and the C.P.I. were practically non-existent in Punjab. The Congress was discredited because it had accepted partition and had by its own mismanagement
brought untold miseries to the common man. There was a strong view that the Congress had ignored Hindu interests and succumbed to Muslim fanaticism. Also there was a very strong wave in India against partition. As Punjab was deeply affected by the horrors of partition, so the Jana Sangh was born to fill the vacuum of an organized nationalistic party based on Indianness. In this chapter the role of the R.S.S. in the emergence of the party has also been dealt with.

Since every political party is rooted in a certain historical necessity at a given point of time, and gives expression to certain aspirations arising out of this necessity, the second chapter has been devoted to the ideology of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The basis on which this policy stood was Bharatiya Sanskriti and Maryada. In a nutshell it was totally Indian in concept and content. It believed in a strong democratic India where every part of the nation and every section of the people could get full opportunity for growth and development. The party was in favour of establishing Dharam Rajya and its leaders fully believed in the unitary form of government and in political, social and economic democracy. It stated its fundamentals as 'one country', 'one people', 'one culture', 'one nation' and 'one ideal'. In the realm of cultural ideology the party energetically promoted Indianization of education rooted in Indian culture. According to its economic policy the central point of all its activities was the economic man. It was in favour of a mixed decentralised economy in which man's own initiative remains
unobstructed but in which his humanism and his relation with the rest of the society do not stand at a discount. Its foreign policy was guided by enlightened national self-interest, world peace, friendly relations with all countries and opposition to imperialism and colonialism. It advocated a policy of strict reciprocity towards Pakistan and China.

The third chapter deals with the organizational set-up of the Jana Sangh. The party had four-tier organization such as Sthaniya (local) Samiti, Mandal (block) Samiti, Zila (district) Samiti and Pradesh (provincial) Pratinidhi Sabha. To co-ordinate between the province and the all-India Working Committee and to tone up the organizational base of the party a new office of Zonal Secretary was created in 1958. There was a parliamentary Board to contest various elections. At the highest level was the Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha. To increase membership a new cadre of whole-time paid workers to work in the rural and urban areas was organized. Discipline in the party was maintained by resorting to different methods such as laying down rules for members and units, disciplinary action, suspension from membership or personal check or supervision by the leaders. In fact, the principles of democracy and centralism were operated in the organization of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. This chapter also provides a detail account about membership, income and expenditure.

The fourth chapter gives an account of the electoral performance of the Jana Sangh in Punjab. It has been found that the Jana Sangh performance in its earlier career was not very
encouraging but in its later period, i.e. in 1967, with its workers and leaders acquiring election experience it was able to capture more seats and became the third biggest party after the Congress and the Akali Dal. In 1969 election, it formed an electoral alliance with the Akali Dal and was able to capture 5 rural seats. But in the 1971 mid term Lok Sabha election and in the 1972 Punjab Vidhan Sabha election it failed to open its score because of the popularity of Mrs. Indira Gandhi victory over Bangla Desh and the changed attitude of the Arya Samajists. This "electoral limitation" in terms of winning seats, did not reflect the "organizational strength" of the party because the organization was based on vertical support rather than on horizontal support. The material for this chapter is mostly drawn from the reports of the Election Commission of India and the newspaper accounts of elections from 1952 to 1972.

Since movements and agitations form an essential part of a political party's life, and reflect in themselves the ethos and character of that party, the fifth chapter deals with the movements and agitations launched by the Punjab Jana Sangh. The major protest movements the Jana Sangh led and launched may be divided into two parts: issues within Punjab such as the refugee problem, the language problem and Punjabi Suba etc., and issues outside the Punjab like the Jammu and Kashmir problem, the Goa problem and aggressions by China and Pakistan etc. For this, it organized prabhat pheris, rallies, corner meetings, conferences and Public meetings. These measures of the Jana Sangh succeeded in focussing the attention of the people on certain very important
matters. The Jana Sangh's total pro occupation with 'non-economic' issues, at least until 1967, and its vigorous participation in such religio-linguistic issues as building of Go Sadan's and the cause of Hindi, indicate that the party was primarily serving the "cultural aspirations" of urban, educated and semi-educated Hindus.

During the course of its life the Punjab Jana Sangh was able to form government and share power in coalition with certain political parties and thus the sixth chapter deals with the Jana Sangh in power. In 1967, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh formed the coalition government with the Akali Party and other opposition parties. It worked well because much needed communal harmony was achieved during those days. But with the defection of Lachman Singh Gill on 22 November, 1967, the Jana Sangh-Akali government came to an end. In 1969, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh again joined the Gurnam Singh ministry and the Parkash Singh Badal ministry. This time the Jana Sangh-Akali ministry very short-lived. The creation of Guru Nanak Dev University at Amritsar and the decision of Patiala University which made English the second language and completely debarred Hindi antagonised the Jana Sangh and resulted in the Jana Sangh quitting the ministry on July 30, 1970. In a nutshell, in this chapter an attempt has been made to highlight the circumstances which compelled it to form the ministry with other parties and its achievements and failures.

The last chapter points out that the substance of the Jana Sangh policies since its inception had changed little as it always tried to keep its roots deep in the soil of traditional
Hinduism while idealistically looking forward to a modern and open society in India. In Punjab it remained an urban party supported by refugees and large sections of those who believed in the past glory of India. Thus it was not popular among all sections of the society but was rather confined to some sections and groups. It failed to penetrate in the rural, scheduled castes, Sikhs and Muslim population. After 1967, it had also lost the support of large number of Arya Samajists because of its taking part in the coalition government with the Akalis. No doubt, it made a niche for itself by focusing on the different problems of the people through movements and agitations in some sections of the people, but it could never become a second force in Punjab because it lacked a popular base. To become popular and to widen its base it ought to have provided a more acceptable political, social and economic programme.

This work is based largely on material from the weekly 'organizer', which is closely associated with both the R.S.S. and the Jana Sangh. Party documents and other printed material of the party has been supplemented by personal interviews with the party leaders. Daily newspapers and periodicals have also been consulted for the present work.