CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

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The emergence of the Janata Party as an alternative to the Congress party in 1977 General elections both at the centre and some of the northern states is almost a historic event of far reaching consequence. In fact, it may be called a peaceful revolution because a major change took place without violence and bloodshed. The myth of the invincibility of the Congress party was exploded and the Congress was replaced by the strong will of the people. The Congress had been governing the country since India got independence in 1947 and people had began to believe that there was no alternative to the Congress party. The tragedy of the phenomenon was that even the Congressmen started believing that they would continue to govern the country without any break and as such they misused their powers for their personal gains. But the 1977 General election proved that the support of the people for Congress cannot be taken for granted. They know how to protect their freedom and personal liberty if they are recklessly attacked by the ruling party. The then Congress Government of Mrs. Indira Gandhi tried to impose her personal rule, the
rule of her family and her caucus. The people even then did not believe that she would misunderstand the people so much, but when she struck a deadly blow to their liberty by imposing a state of emergency, the people reacted sharply. They were waiting for the opportune moment. The opportunity was provided by Mrs. Gandhi herself when she tried to get popular sanction for the imposition of emergency by declaring General election. The opposition parties also behaved with maturity and merged into one party, namely, the Janata Party. The people availed of such opportunity and overthrow the Congress and voted the Janata party to power. It was an event widely acclaimed by the people of India as well as the people of other democratic countries. They welcomed it because India was the first among the Afro-Asian countries that could save democracy from dictatorship.

The Janata party came at the helm of affairs of the country with a bang people pinned their high hopes on its performance. It was expected that the Janata Government would clear the dirt that had accumulated in the administration and policies of the Indira Government. It is a fact that the Janata Government with new vigour and firm faith cleared some of the dirt that had gathered round the Congress misrule. It was very much alive to the expectations of the people. The poll promises were still fresh in the minds of the leaders.
Gradually, it began to remove the aberrations that had come in the body politic of our country. Although the Janata party ruled the country for a very brief period of about twenty-eight months, it had some achievements in the political, social and economic fields. It restored civil liberties, rule of law, fundamental freedom, powers of the Supreme Court and repealed the maintenance of Internal security Act. Step was also taken to repeal the 24th Amendment. Political prisoners were released, those who had lost their jobs in the emergency were re-appointed. The press and the radio were made free and measures were taken to protect the citizens from the misuse of powers. Minorities Commission, Backward classes Commission and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission were set up to suggest measures for the upliftment of these weaker sections. Various schemes were launched for rural development, employment and uplift of weaker sections such as Antyodaya Scheme, food for work scheme, etc. Similarly, social reforms were launched. In this respect prohibition was enforced and a massive programme of Adult Education was launched. Agricultural production reached its all time high record of 135 million tonnes. In the sphere of foreign policy also it was largely successful. It may be said that the greatest achievement of the Janata government was price stability inspite of the fact that it restored 8.33 per cent bonus to the labourers and released parts of impounded compulsory
deposits of the government employees. These achievements at the centre were also reflected in the administration of the states. An era of resurgence, hope and fulfilment was begun with the incoming of the Janata government in Bihar. The trend of immense popular support this government commanded amongst the people, led it to adopt some measures which though opposed by the Congress and its supporters were intended for the benefit of the general masses. No doubt, the Janata party government had also some failures as most of the poll promises could not be fulfilled. The main failure of the Janata party government was in the field of maintenance of law and order. It also failed to bring down prices of essential commodities, though it succeeded in maintaining price stability. Industrial production fell down during the regime of the Janata party. The constituent units of the Janata party could not get success in patching up their ideological differences and could never free themselves from their old loyalties. They could not forget their separate identities and pulled and pushed the government in different directions and made attempts to gain dominance over other constituents. Their attitude towards the rest was full of suspicion, rivalry and jealousy. The party failed in giving concrete direction to the country due to ideological differences among the leaders of the party. The major failure of the Janata
government was that the party could not rule for the full tenure of five years. Given sufficient time to merge their identities completely, the constituent units of the Janata could have liquidated their separate identities. As it proved to be an opportunistic alliance hurriedly put together to dismantle Mrs. Gandhi from the seat of power, this party lacked long term goals. Having achieved its most immediate goal of unseating Mrs. Gandhi, its constituents agreed to disagree on almost every item of long term goals. The party had insufficient time to institutionalise as a political alternative to the Congress and could not stand the sabotage engineered by the Congress to bring the whole machinery of the Janata party to the ground. The Congress succeeded in its plan to shatter the whole alliance that had originally produced the alliance. The wreckage at the centre had its impact on the states where group rivalries dominated, cabinet colleagues used to accuse each other without concrete charges, policies settled on the basis of discussions were criticised and flouted publicly. The government always remained busy in instituting commission that served no purpose.

The Janata party, which emerged as the strongest political party in the year 1977, could not maintain its position for a long. It broke up into pieces that resulted in the collapse of its government on 15th July, 1979. The Janata party was split

into several camps such as the Bhartiya Janata party, the Janata Party (secular or Raj Narayan), the Lok Dal (Janata party Charan Singh), the Janata party (J P). The split in the Janata Party took place when Charan Singh, the then Home Minister of India formed a new party, namely, the Lok Dal, comprising Janata (Secular) headed by Raj Narayan, the socialist group of Madhulimaye and George Fernandes and the Orissa group led by Biju Patnaik, the working president. Thus, the Janata party of 1977, lost its glory and prestige on the political horizon of India. With the downfall of the Janata party, the expectation of the emergence of strong two party system in India dwindled. The factors responsible for the downfall of the Janata party as well as the Janata government both at the Centre and the States may be analysed as follows.

The intra-party politics of the Janata party contributed to the downfall of the Janata party. The scramble of the leaders for power positions was responsible for the failure of the party. The leaders of the non-communist parties formed the Janata party which required giving up their separate identities along with personal and ideological differences. But in fact, the leaders of the Janata party could neither abandon old loyalties nor forget their different ideologies. The history of the emergence
of the Janata party and subsequently its taking over the reigns of government was full of dirty political games politicians generally engage in. Lack of emotional integration mutual understanding and co-operation among the leaders of the Janata party shattered the party into pieces. The struggle for power destroyed the image of the Janata party. In other words it may be said that the foundation of the devastation of the party was laid by none else than the leaders themselves. Having been out of power these politicians had known only the politics of irresponsibility and indiscipline. When the new situation demanded unity of action and behaviour, their long habit of despondency and apathy failed them to rise up to the occasion.

The history of the Janata party was full of ebb and flow. The Janata party met many crises during its regime just after the formation of the Morarji Desai Government on 24 March, 1977. Ram Dhan, one of the General Secretaries of the Janata party resigned from the post in protest against the manner in which Morarji Desai was elected leader of the party. Within five months of the Janata rule, Madhulimaye, General Secretary of the party called upon the RSS and the allied wings of the party to clarify their links with the Janata party. 29 April 1973 was

the day when Charan Singh resigned inciting dissidence against the Chief Minister of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The crisis in the party became deeper when Charan Singh and Raj Narayan were asked to resign from the Cabinet on 29 June 1978 by the Prime Minister. Charan Singh was asked to resign from the Cabinet because he had characterised the leaders of the Janata party as 'a bunch of impotent people' because they had failed to take any action against Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Raj Narayan was asked to resign because he had violated the collective responsibility of the Cabinet and also because he was accustomed of behaving in an undignified manner. He was asked to resign also because he had violated the prohibitory orders enforced in Simla and criticised the Chief Minister. On 30 June 1978 Raj Narayan and Charan Singh along with four Ministers of state resigned from the government. In protest, erstwhile BLD decided on 2 July, 1978 to hold rally against the ouster of Charan Singh and Raj Narayan from the Cabinet. On the other hand, Charan Singh on 5 July, 1978 claimed that Morarji Desai was annoyed over his suggestion to set up an inquiry commission on

5. Ibid., 1.5.1978.
6. Ibid., 1.7.1978.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 2.7.1978.
9. Ibid., 5.7.1978.
the charges of corruption against Kanti Desai, son of the Prime Minister. It was on this account that the Prime Minister had asked him to resign. The first phase of crisis in the party ended on 12 July, 1948, when Charan Singh withdrew his letter of resignation from the National Executive and the Parliamentary Board of the Janata party in response to the request of the party executive. There was continuous bickering among the leaders of the Janata party. Madhumayee resigned from the party General Secretarvship on 17 August, 1978. On the very day Chandra Shekher offered to resign to make way for Charan Singh to become the party chief. The second phase of crisis in the party came to an end with the rejoining of Charan Singh in the Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister. Jagjivan Ram was also appointed Deputy Prime Minister on 24 January, 1979.

The Janata party was also on the verge of crisis when on 12 June 1979 Raj Narayan was removed from the National Executive of the party by the Central Disciplinary Committee for his anti-party activities. He resigned from the Janata party along with his followers on 23 June, 1979 accusing it of being dominated by Communism of RSS, authoritarianism of Morarji Desai and conspiratorial politics and inaction of Chandra

Shekher, the president of the party. The break away group was known as Janata (Secular). Hence the strength of the Janata party (the followers of Morarji Desai) in the Lok Sabha was reduced to a minority. There was no option before Desai, but to resign.

Moreover, the power politics and strong desire of Charan Singh to become the Prime Minister of India was responsible for the downfall of the party and failure of the Janata government. Nanaji Deshmukh in his book *RSS Victim of slander of Multi-dimensional study of RSS, Jana Sangh, Janata Party and the Present Crisis* observed, "Charan Singh has never been an exponent of a politics of change. He is more at home in game of power politics." No doubt, Charan Singh was ambitious for the Prime Ministership. Just after the Victory of the Janata party in the Lok Sabha election of 1977, he geared his political game with the sole purpose to become the Prime Minister of India. A number of issues were raised to defame Morarji Desai and to seek support of masses such as Kanti Desai issue, dual membership issue, etc. He used to criticise Desai government for not taking any legal action against Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Evidently

his purpose was to invite crisis in the party so that he could be in a position to satisfy his ego. So, immediately after the formation of the Janata party government under the leadership of Desai, he encouraged the leaders of the opposition parties to raise the Kanti Desai issue and he himself started correspondence on the alleged misdoing of Kanti Desai, son of Morarji Desai. He had utilised the Kanti Desai issue as a vehicle and the dual membership issue as a media to defame the government. The first time the question of dual membership and RSS infiltration in the Janata party became the cause of a major wrangle in April 1977 at Sarnath were the youth wings of the Janata Constituents on it to form a common youth body. But non-Jansangh youth leaders put their foot down as they did not agree to a merger until the question of dual membership had been settled. The whole intention of Charan Singh was to create crisis in the party. The crisis in the party went deeper and deeper.

Charan Singh's politics in states was to get more and more men of the BLD group in the states as well as at the centre. His purpose was to capture centre through the medium of the states. Therefore, he tried to get share of the BLD in proportion to its strength in the party. During the Assembly elections, he attempted to get maximum share of the seats with the

purpose to have maximum number of followers in the state legislatures. At this election, the BLD and the Jan Sangh shared seats according to their strength. At the same time his politics was to have chief Ministers of his own party in different states so that he could be in a better position to struggle for power at the Centre. The power politics of Charan Singh as well as other leaders of the Janata party destroyed the image of the Janata party and made in vain all the hopes of the masses.

Raj Narayan too had played a destructive role in the breaking up of the Janata party. The main issue of Raj Narayan's crusade was the RSS and its communalism. He resigned on 23 June, 1979 from the party accusing it of being dominated by communalism of RSS, authoritarianism of Morarji Desai and conspiratorial politics and inaction of Chandra Shekhar, the President of the Janata party. In fact, Subramaniam Swamy was the first man who gave a call for the dismissal of Chandra Shekhar, Raj Narayan had supported this proposal. This propaganda forced more and more politician to leave the party and the Government. Delhi had become a mad house and parliament's

17. Deshmukh, Mana, op. cit, p.123.
central hall a sharebrokers market in the second week of July, 1979. Thus the inner politics of the Janata party shattered the party into pieces. On the one hand, the lust of power gave birth to the Janata party and on the other, ambition to gain power destroyed the party. The power politics of the leaders of the Janata party contributed to the downfall of the party and the failure of the Janata Government. It was not a new thing for Raj Narayan and Charan Singh. Raj Narayan had broken up his socialist party as many as six times during the last two decades. Similarly, "Charan Singh initiated the process of defection in 1967, repeated his antics at the Centre and, unfortunately for the country, succeeded in his design. In this year of face, 1979, the master defector, because of his experience in his nefarious trade, succeeded in realising his ambition of becoming the Prime Minister.

Janata party like any other political party was a coalitional structure with plurality of leadership and organizational sub-groups. The leaders and sub-groups vied with each other for ascendance and supremacy transforming the party, as usual in a democracy, into a conflict system. While other democratic parties tolerate these conflicts to an extent, they

20. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 138.
cannot afford to allow these conflicts to jeopardise the party's primary objective of controlling power apparatus of society or to break the party, the Janata party tried to maintain such an extent of intra-party democracy that these conflicts brought the downfall of the Janata party. The leaders of the constituent units of the Janata party could not strike a proper balance between the self-aggrandizing tendency of the sub-groups and the party's basic thrust for power and many of them came to acquire power at the cost of the central command leading to the establishment of various centres of power.

Consequently there was a wide chasm between profession and performance. The party was devoid of new ideas in economic, social and political fields. The bureaucracy and the government machinery failed to cooperate with the party leaders and the party could not fulfil its poll promises. This led to a disenchantment of the people with the Janata which had failed not only to fulfill the high expectations of those who voted for it but even to provide governments at the centre and the states capable of facing the pressing political, economic and administrative problems. The recrudescence of communal violence, erosion of political authority, the growth of explosive caste tensions in Bihar and incessant infighting at the government level combined to create a sense of disillusionment with the Janata Party.
Due to failure of government machinery, the party could not fulfil its promises. The Janata party introduced various schemes for the uplift of the weaker sections and for the rural development, but the schemes could not be implemented successfully due to corrupt practices on mass scale. Corruption and inefficiency of officials also contributed to its failure.

The ill health of Jaya Prakash Narayan too contributed to its failure. The party was fathered by Jaya Prakash Narayan who failed to settle the bickerings of the party because of his deteriorating health. Under such a situation, the leaders of the different constituents became free to choose their own way making the rift wider.

Moreover, the deteriorating moral values resulting in unethical behaviour of the political leaders, added its own share to the failure of the party because this proved to the people that Janata was no better than the Congress. However, to hold the party alone responsible for its failure would be unjustified. Besides the leaders of the party the whole government machinery along with the citizens was responsible for its collapse. During the regime of the Janata party, law and order kept deteriorating. Rape, murder, and riot became the order of the day. The administration did not help the
Government in removing the hurdles in the way of the implementation of policies and maintenance of law and order.

The deteriorating moral values of the political leaders as well as citizens were also responsible for the law and order problems. Communal riots, caste rivalries and riots were mainly due to the lack of consciousness among the masses. Neither they had the capacity nor the interest to think over it. It politicians are determined to spread communal riots, caste feelings and caste-riots, the citizens must defeat their evil designs. To be more accurate, the whole of the society is responsible for the communal riots and other law and order problems. Politicians, leaders, government and the citizens must remain vigilant on this issue.

There is little doubt that the Janata experiment failed. It could get success only when personal ambitions of the leaders were subordinated to the good of the society. But the fact remains that it effected some lasting and temporary political influences on the people and the nation. The impact of the Janata party on the Indian political system cannot be undermined.

It brought polarisation of political forces in the country. The people were clearcut in their approach whether they wanted quick economic prosperity at the cost of liberty or slow economic prosperity with liberty. Those who wanted the
former, supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi and those who wanted the latter, supported the Janata party.

The emergence of the Janata party heralded the arrival of a two-party system on the Indian political scene. The CPI and CPI (M) had no strong base and they were somehow or other aligned with the Congress and the Janata party respectively. This was a sound development in our democratic fibre. However, it failed to become a permanent feature of the Indian political system.

One of the most important impacts of the Janata rule was the creation and strengthening of what J P called "Lok Shakti". The coming of the Janata party into power gave a rare confidence to the people of this country that they can remove a government if it goes amuck under intoxication of power and if it does not rule the country efficiently and honestly. This development is something precious for a democratic country. Apart from this very fact we find that the victory of the Janata party was due to popular support to it and opposition to the Congress. This was the reason that dumping of huge amounts of money by the Congress could not influence the voters. In fact, it was not an election; it was a revolution. Although at the moment it lies shattered, but a trend towards one rival party against the Congress is
visible in the attempts of the opposition parties to come on one platform on certain issues. The coming of Janata party into power gave a big blow to the developing dictorial tendency. It proved that the dictatorship is bound to meet its failure in the absence of consent of the masses.

The emergence of the Janata party brought split in the Congress party. As the Congress was voted out of power, its leaders started criticising Mrs. Gandhi for the defeat of the party. In this circumstance, the Congress was divided into two groups— one led by Mrs. Gandhi and the other led by K. Brahmanand Reddy. Thus the coming of Janata party to power seemed to weaken the Congress party.

Whatever be the failures and achievements of the Janata party, one thing is clear that given the chance, appropriate leadership and emerging threats to democracy, the opposition political parties are not only apt to polarization but can throw an alternative to the ruling party. Indeed the opposition is divided on the issues of programmes, policies and ideologies but when threatened with repression and possible extinction, they have the courage, resilience and the leadership to fight back for their existence and the existence of a proper democratic environment. The forces of polarisation, though lie dormant, can be vivided and kindled even by a single national leader as shown by the experiments of 1967 and 1975.
The potentials for the emergence of a viable alternative to the Congress are present in the system but due to the lack of adaptability, coherence and grass-root support to small parties which are not easily ready to merge that identity together, a national alternative as well as state alternatives to the Congress have failed to emerge till now. Janata party has proved beyond doubt that building an alternative to the Congress is not a mere will-of-the-wall pursuit of the opposition parties, especially of the non-communist variety, but can be termed into a living reality should the Congress dream of perpetuating its rule in any conceivable way except constitutions. No doubt the Janata party could not survive on the Indian political scene for a long time to remain a permanent alternative to the Congress and give birth to a viable opposition party, but its meteoric rise cleared many a doubts about the opposition's role in the Indian politics.